



ISSUE EIGHTY-THREE

UK: £2.50 (rec) US \$5.50 Canada \$6.50

TIMELASH

THE MAKING OF A TELEVISION DRAMA SERIES



BORZAK WAS REALLY VERY UPSET. Not just mildly displeased, or even irritated, as he frequently was by the ignorant rabble that made up Karfel's art circle, but deep down really churned up and angry.

It seemed that his masterpiece had not won the all-round approval of the Council. Particularly the new Borad. The darker side of Borzak's personality took solace in the fact that the new Borad was an old man, probably rather infirm in fact, as he was never seen out of his chamber and used the video screens to pass on his edicts. Maylin Renis would relay everything else as the only man allowed into the Borad's private sector.

And now, as Borzak watched, the plasterers were burying his piece behind inches of fake walling, the Borad having apparently decided he didn't like reflective surfaces. This week. Next week it would be blue-faced androids, green doors or overhead lighting. The Borad was predictably unpredictable.

The painting was of a great man who had visited Karfel some decades earlier - Borzak dimly remembered him, but his late father had always recounted the stories. The Doctor, he had been called. He had found a way to save the planet and been made an honorary hero as a result (usually only Karfelons were able to ascend to the Hall of Heroes) and to honour him further, the official Council Appointed Artist of the Century, Borzak, had been commissioned to paint his portrait. It had been completed exactly where the subject apparently flattered but so characteristically embarrassed by the honour had asked for it to be placed, fifteen years ago. A marvellous oil on glass portrait of the Doctor with one of his many artifacts. And since then it had been mounted along one wall of the Council Chamber.

But no more. Oh no, the new Borad didn't like it. No one had said 'Borzak, would you like it back?' or 'Borzak, as an artist, what would you do with it?' Damn it all, no one had even said 'Sorry'. 'Excuse me, sir,' said an android, gently but firmly easing Borzak aside. As Borzak moved, he realised where he was standing was the new home of a bizarre pyramid structure, fractionally taller than himself, covered with a silver gauze. Four androids were needed to manhandle it into place, while a couple of Karfelon Guardoliers placed a smaller control console beside it and began attaching heavy duty ambulating between the two.

Borzak frowned. They were replacing - no, burying - his magnificent work of art and instead the Council were to look at some ridiculous piece of sculpture that, he presumed, lit up at night or something.

It was the final straw.

He gave his painting one final look - which was all he had time for as the last piece immediately vanished under putty - and stomped out of the Council Rooms. Maylin Renis passed him, coming from the general direction of the Borad's chambers. Renis held up a hand, an indication he was going to speak to Borzak. An apology, perhaps. Some words of

regret from the Borad or, at least, the Council?

'Where are you going, Artisan Borzak? The Borad's chambers are off-limits to anyone other than myself. He is at rest and has insisted on no further interruptions.'

Borzak looked at Renis. They had known each other for years but Borzak had never believed his friend could become quite so toadying, quite so easily manipulated by their leader. It was as if all the strength and character had been drained from Renis recently.

'How is your wife?' Borzak asked.

Clearly bemused by the change in subject, Renis stammered: 'She grows weaker, but little Vena is a source of pleasure for her. I understand that the doctors have said she no longer needs hospitalisation.'

'Good,' said Borzak. 'Good day, Renis.'

Renis nodded and started away before turning back. 'I said...'

But Borzak pretended to not hear him and walked faster, knowing that Renis had neither the backbone nor the gall to chase after him. Moments later, Borzak hammered on the doors to the Borad's chambers.

'Enter,' came the recognisably soft voice of the old man who ruled Karfel so arbitrarily. Borzak entered and was surprised to see that even therein, the Borad was just a face on a video screen.

'What troubles you, Artisan Borzak?'

Borzak angrily addressed the picture. 'Thank you for seeing me, Borad, but you are correct. I am troubled.'

'Your painting? My dear Borzak, it has served the Council well over the last few years, but change is inevitable. You must accept the need for change. For... evolution. As indeed must we all.'

Borzak wanted to ask why he had not been consulted, why he had not been allowed to remove the painting. Why it had to be vandalised in such a way.

But he hadn't got the first syllable out before an inner door slid upwards and a figure walked out. For a brief moment, Borzak thought the Borad had deigned to meet him in person, but no. It was someone else. 'Counsellor Tekker? I thought...'

Tekker smiled. And Borzak felt suddenly very cold. Tekker's smile was wide but it did not reach his eyes. Borzak knew how to read people - that was part of the job of an artist - to see the inner soul of their subjects. If Borzak were to sketch Tekker at that moment, it would have been as an iceberg. A grinning iceberg. Covered with barbs.

'The Borad has asked me to demonstrate something to you, Artisan Borzak,' said Tekker, his voice dripping with insincere pleasure.

'But only Maylin Renis...'

Tekker shrugged. 'Maylins come, Maylins go, Borzak. Like paintings, what is fashionable one day, is outmoded the next. Come.'

Another door opened and two androids stood behind it, leading back out into the well-lit corridor. 'The Borad wishes you to understand the... purpose of the

changes he desires.'

And so Borzak allowed Tekker and the androids to escort him from the Borad's chambers, away from his chance of making the angry speeches he had thought up over the last few days. And instead, Borzak was amazed, and a little disgusted, to find he was slightly afraid.

Is this what had changed Renis over the years? Fear of their leader? Fear of absolute rule?

Within minutes, they were back in the Council Room, now empty of everyone. Everyone Karfelon that is. The four androids still stood beside the new sculpture, plus the two that had arrived with him and Tekker. Tekker crossed the room to the object beside the sculpture and activated it. 'The Borad is, as you know, a tinkerer. Ever since the subject of your... delightful portrait left us so hurriedly, the Borad has been fascinated with his stories of time travel. Of crossing the dimensions. And so he has created this.' With a flourish, he pressed a few switches and the sculpture lit up. Through the gauze, instead of the darkened back Borzak expected to see, he could see stars, planets, galaxies, swirling around as far back as the eye could see. Instinctively, he walked behind the sculpture but no, it was only a couple of feet deep. But inside... inside it was vast. Impossible but vast.

'A marvellous device, far more imaginative than a dull painting, Artisan, don't you think?'

Borzak stepped closer, getting down on all fours to peer through the gauze, to see the universe beyond. 'A projection?'

'Oh no,' laughed Tekker. 'Reality.'

Borzak froze where he was. 'But that's... impossible...' He turned to confront Tekker, to tell him he was talking arrant tosh, but one of the androids took Borzak's arm instead.

'Take a close look, Borzak,' Tekker hissed in his ear. 'Take the closest look possible!'

And Borzak, squirming ineffectually against the might of the android's grip found the gauze giving way as he was pushed through.

And he was amongst the stars. They were all around him, like a hologram. Below his feet, he could just see kontron crystals, yards below. But that in itself was impossible. Below should be the caverns and cellars of the City. He looked back to the android, who was represented now just by an arm emerging from the universal backdrop. Of the Council Room, Borzak could see nothing.

And then he realised.

'Don't let go...' he said. But before the android's grip had relaxed, Borzak knew he had been a fool.

And that Tekker had betrayed him. But the Borad?

And then Borzak felt the grip gone and the sudden rush of wind around him. 'Welcome to the timelash!' Tekker's voice came from everywhere.

Or inside his head.

And then the long spinning began. He was moving... somewhere.

And Borzak wondered when he would stop. If ever.

Gary Russell



Timelash

ISSN 0953-3303

Issue 83

First published

March 1999

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Subscriptions: Please note new rates: 8 issues for £23.00 (UK only: add £2.50 for mailing in card envelopes); USA/Canada £30/\$45, Australasia £36.

Subscription Address:

Cheques payable to:

Jeremy Bentham

13 Northfield Road,

Borehamwood

WD6 5AE UK

Editor: Anthony Brown

Publisher: Jeremy Bentham

Format © Justin Richards, Peter Anghelides, June 1986

Doctor Who © BBC television 1983, 1998

Contributors: Peter Anghelides, Paula Bentham, Phil Bevan, David Brunt, Tony Clark, David J Darlington, Derek Handley, Andrew Pixley, Gary Russell, Stephen James Walker, Martin Wiggins.

Cover: © BBC

Graphics: Mark Hadlett

Origination: GLA Productions

Colour: Panda Press

Printers: Panda Press



ORIGINS: Nobody has ever set out to create a sub-standard piece of drama, yet material which is ultimately judged to be below par slips out, just as other productions garner applause beyond any expectations. Among *Doctor Who* fans *TIMELASH* has become one of those stories judged to be lacking. Readers of *Doctor Who Magazine*, voting in the all-time poll of the 160 serials produced between 1963 and 1996, rated the story at number 158, only marginally ahead of *THE SPACE PIRATES* and *THE TWIN DILEMMA*.

But why should a story produced in an era of television noted for its technical innovations and produced by a team with more than four years experience of the programme do so badly? As Eccles put it in the *Goon Show*, "...everybody gotta be somewhere," so it is inevitable that some story has to come bottom of the heap. But why it should have been *TIMELASH*?

An obvious factor is the serial's position as the fifth in the annual production year, following on from two expensive, location centred shows — *THE TWO DOCTORS* and *THE MARK OF THE RANI*. After such extravaganzas it was obvious some taking stock would have to follow, if only to balance the departmental books. Producer John Nathan-Turner already knew from long experience that he needed one studio-bound story per year to balance the budget. So a story with *TIMELASH*'s structure would have been booked in at the season planning stages due to the high volume of filming slated for other serials. That the productions named above incurred expensive re-mounts only exacerbated the debit columns as the production year unfolded.



SCRIPT: *TIMELASH* started life as an unsolicited manuscript sent to Script-Editor Eric Saward by aspiring writer Glen McCoy. Although employed full-time as an ambulance driver McCoy's wish since childhood had been to make a living out of writing. He was in his late-twenties by the time he submitted his story idea to the *Doctor Who* office, having found a pathway into television by submitting story material to the BBC1 hospital soap *Angels*.

McCoy had also cracked the book market, having several short stories published before he received his *Doctor Who* commission. His storyline for the *Time Lord* arose from another great love: one of his favourite authors was H.G. Wells.

McCoy's submission to Saward proposed several unusual "What if..." scenarios. What if H.G. Wells had actually met the Doctor and travelled with him to the future? And what if his account of conflict between the subdued Eloi and the savage, subterranean Morlocks in *The Time Machine* was a reflection on some future struggle involving the series' own race of mutant degenerates, the Daleks?

The storyline first landed on Saward's desk some time in the spring of 1983. Saward liked the presence of H.G. Wells and the notion of a time corridor linking two time zones together, and his feedback amounted to advising the author not to use Daleks — as Terry Nation owned the copyright — and to try re-working the ideas into something more original. Keen to find new blood for the series Saward was sufficiently impressed with the revised treatment to offer McCoy a formal commission for a scene breakdown on May 11 1983.

The writer's treatment inspired a subsequent commission for an episode one script on June 24, but it was not until November 23 that year that episode two was requested.

The gap appears to be due to a change of heart by Saward after receiving the draft of episode one. In short he felt Glen McCoy had good ideas, but lacked experience committing them to paper.

If Saward's recollections are accurate then a key question follows. At what point did Nathan-Turner sanction payment for an second episode script? Did he read episode one and give his verdict before or after the full costs of the 1983/84 production year — which had amassed some very hefty over-runs and strike delays — were known? With BBC budgetary years running in calendar as well as fiscal cycles it is likely that John Nathan-Turner wanted a full story commissioned and on the books in time to buy it out of sums held over from 1983's budget. Effectively it meant he could get a set of scripts for the 1984/85 recording year without including them in that year's budget estimates.

McCoy's material borrowed richly from the works of H.G. Wells. Allowing that the *TARDIS* as a time machine was a concept borrowed from that author's works years earlier, he based the female lead, Vena, on a corruption of the name Weena, the Eloi girl who befriended the time traveller in Wells' novel.

The Doctor's demonstration of invisibility suggests an inspiration for Herbert's later writing of *The Invisible Man*, while the macabre experiments in cellular experimentation conducted by the Borad are a possible basis for *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

In picturing his alien world McCoy was quite specific about what he wanted from the Visual Effects model makers:

"Establish planet Karfel: sandy, desert-like terrain with gorse bush vegetation and the odd tree. Built in this environment is the central citadel, a conglomeration of triangular shaped blocks culminating in a structure of enormous



proportions.

"From the citadel spread long tracks of roadways to other areas of the planet. An orange haze from the giant fireball sun gives the whole citadel incandescent, sparkling qualities."

McCoy even added a note for the set designer.

"All the interior surfaces are matt and dull. Also this place has a predilection for the triangle and pyramid shape. All objects tend to be based on this design!"

Right from the outset the writer had chosen a title for his story, *TIMELASH*, naming it after the device that linked Karfel to Earth's past. Contrary to myth, the actual cabinet prop eventually seen on screen was not the by-product of a severely pruned budget. Glen McCoy's stage direction indicated ideas that the set designer simply followed:

"In the centre of the council room is 'the Timelash', a pentagonal block about five feet high with a star-shaped door. To the right hand side of the room are banks of instrumentation mainly connected with the Timelash..."

"Gazak struggles as Tekker mans an instrument panel, activating the opening of the Timelash. The star-shaped door reveals a bright light and swirling vortex — an entrancing sight. See fear in Tyheer's face and sombre expressions of council. The Maylin is saddened by his duty. The android grabs Gazak as his noose is released. The youth is pushed towards the Timelash screaming and struggling, then is ejected inside. We see the body dissolve in the vortex."

Named as Herbert throughout the script, the description of a young H.G. Wells was kept vague by McCoy, describing him merely as being about 25 years old. He was, however, punctilious about some of the furnishings in his Victorian country cabin, "The book is the Bible and on the wall behind him is a crucifix. On the table is an upturned glass and letters, ouija board style".

Even as late as production versions of the script McCoy appears confused about some of the names of his creations. The Borad's world is named as both Karfel and Karfelon, and its people alternately as Karfelons or Karfelites. As for the Borad itself/himself, the writer was keen to emphasise the creature's amphibian nature, which kept it confined to a sanctum that housed its giant swimming tank. Unable to walk because of its amphibian lower torso, the creature moved 'on land' by means of an electrically powered chair into which it could prop itself.

"Glen McCoy, who had done a little bit of work on *EastEnders*, came up with an idea that was sort of half reasonable, but again he couldn't write very well for the medium. He stayed in because John [Nathan-Turner] was reluctant to reject anything because of the cost involved in commissioning a replacement script. So I did a bit more work on it." **Eric Saward, 1986, interviewed by Gary Leigh**



SCRIPT-EDITING: Glen McCoy delivered his draft scripts around July 1984, nearly eight months after their commissioning. The main reason behind this generous deadline seems to be simple lack of urgency. The story had been pre-slated as fifth in the season recording order, which meant the Director and his team would not even need to begin looking at material until September at the earliest.

By the time they were delivered Eric Saward was on leave in Rhodes for an extended six-week holiday, during which he could concentrate on structuring a storyline that would ultimately become *REVELATION OF THE DALEKS*. On his return Saward was thrust straight into the logistical rewrites and tweaks needed

for *THE TWO DOCTORS* and *THE MARK OF THE RANI*, which were in production during late summer, early autumn 1984.

The upshot appears to have been severe limitations on the time he could give to working on *TIMELASH* — and when he finally got around to examining the scripts, he was far from impressed. However, pressure to complete stories three and four and get his own serial up to speed, seems to have limited opportunities to work on the *TIMELASH* scripts with Glen McCoy. The end result was a version far closer to the writer's concept than something would normally air in *Doctor Who*. The Script-Editor admitted as much in his 1986 interview for *DWB*.

This is not to say the whole thing was handed to the Director before some work had been done. One of the first things

changed was the name of the Karfelons' interplanetary neighbours. McCoy had named them Gurdelons from the planet Gurdal, which both Saward and Nathan-Turner felt sounded like items of under-clothing. So they became Bandrils, described in the script as, "ugly creatures(s), resembling a crocodile with a general humanoid frame, dressed quite smartly".

Saward also chose to hold over until part two the revelation that the old man, the face of the Borad as seen by the Karfelons on their TV screens, was actually no more than an android. The draft version had a short scene in part one, just after the Borad's first televised broadcast to his people, of the old man robot rising from its chair in front of a TV camera after being disconnected from a cable by another android.

Another change was to McCoy's concept of the word Maylin. In the story's transmitted version the word is suggested simply as a rank aspired towards by members of the council — like a mayor. In his

draft submissions the writer proposed Maylin as meaning something akin to "father" in both family and religious contexts. Hence Maylin Renis was originally Maylin Vena, denoting him as "father" to his daughter Vena and "father" to the Karfelon council. Saward amended his name to reduce confusion for viewers.

The opening scenes of the story were shuffled and rejigged by Saward too. Scene one was to have been a model shot of the citadel, followed by an establishing sequence of Tyheer and Aram fleeing from the Guardoliers, and then the first *TARDIS* scene. While moving the *TARDIS* scene to first in running order Saward also modified the tone of the Peri/Doctor exchange. As initially written Peri is feeling lonely, homesick and resistant to the Doctor's claim that all she needs is a holiday on the Eye of Orion. Frankly, aimless intergalactic travel no longer inspires her, to which the Doctor retorts:

DOCTOR: Aimless? You see our time together as aimless? (PERI NODS) But what about the achievement in defeating the Cybermen, the challenge of Sil, the evil of the Sontarans? Was all this aimless, without purpose?

PERI: I guess not...

DOCTOR: If you want to throw in the towel, Peri, I shall be the last person to stand in your way. (HE RESUMES ATTENTION TO THE CONSOLE) Tell me you've had enough and I'll gladly set the co-ordinates for Earth, 1984.

PERI: That won't be necessary, Doctor. I apologise for accelerating my mouth before putting my brain in gear.

Both the Morlox and the Borad's fundamentally amphibious natures were played down too. McCoy's scene breakdowns referred to rock pools in the underground tunnels and placed a large swimming tank in the Borad's quarters. Aware of the technical problems of having water tanks in studios, and that there was no budget for tank filming at Ealing, Saward rewrote to underplay the amphibian angle. In doing so he lost a line from the Borad as he views Peri on his screen for the first time, "Perhaps in the near future I won't be swimming alone".

Another deletion was a short run-around scene in part one before Vena's 'ghost' passes through the *TARDIS* control room. Anxious to free his ship from impending collision with the Kontron Tunnel the Doctor races out into the *TARDIS* corridors to look for some auxiliary equipment for the control console. During his search he rummages through a number of cupboards, finding everything from a policeman's helmet to a samurai outfit. Feeling it added nothing to the story, other than some dramatic urgency, these chunks of action which would have involved erecting another set were pruned out.

Peri's meeting with the underground resistance group was significantly rewritten by Saward, in particular to remove her recognition of the seal on Katz' locket as originating on Gallifrey. Instead he substituted her identifying the image of a girl in the locket as that of Jo Grant.

SEZON: Well, what does it signify? (AT FIRST PERI SEEMS TO HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH THE ANSWER, BUT THEN SPEAKS)

PERI: (PLAINLY) Gallifrey: it's the Doctor's home planet. (KATZ SMILE AT SEZON WHO, SOMEWHAT SURPRISED, LOWERS HIS WEAPON) I'm glad we're on the same side now.

KATZ: (ALSO PLEASED) I'm Katz. This is our leader, Sal. (SEZON NODS)

PERI: I'm Peri, the Doctor's assistant.

KATZ: I can't believe he's back. Where is the Doctor?

PERI: He was talking to the Maylin before we got separated and I nearly got strangled.

SEZON: Gives you some idea of what we're up against.

KATZ: The last time the Doctor was here he helped my grandfather save our planet from famine.

SEZON: I'd give anything to trade famine for our present fate.

PERI: It's that bad?

KATZ: Sources say our neighbours on Gurdal are threatening total annihilation of our planet with a Bandalypse warhead.

SEZON: A missile so powerful that it will kill every living thing in seconds without bringing down a single brick.

PERI: Sounds familiar.

SEZON: Everyone will cease to be with the exception of the Morlox creatures and the plant life.

KATZ: What we don't understand is why the Inner Sanctum's provoking the attack. They seem to be just asking for a Gurdal strike force to wipe us out. We certainly don't have the technology to stop them.

SEZON: Our planet's in the hands of madmen — and we've got to stop them destroying us all.

KATZ: Sezon will lead us to victory.

PERI: Sezon? Your name is Sezon?

SEZON: Yes, Sal to my friends.

PERI: I got this message in the Citadel — 'Sezon at the Falchan Rocks'.

SEZON: Our agents in the Citadel are regrouping here at Falchan Rocks tomorrow. You and the Doctor must have been identified as potential help. Where's the message? Did you destroy it?

PERI: No, it's in my pocket. (BEGINS TO SEARCH. CRY FROM ANOTHER QUARTER AND A SCUFFLE)

KATZ: (DRAWING HER WEAPON) We're under attack! How could they have found us?

PERI: (LOOKS AT THEM APOLOGETICALLY) I must have dropped it. Guess I wouldn't make a very good spy...

SEZON: (ALSO DRAWING A WEAPON) Take cover! (KATZ AND SEZON TAKE POSITIONS AS PERI



SCRAMBLED FOR COVER. GUARDOLIERS BURST IN AND FIRE IS EXCHANGED. KATZ IS HIT AND DIES. SEZON REALISES IT'S NOT WORTH CONTINUING, THROWS HIS WEAPON DOWN AND RUSHES TO HER)

SEZON: Katz... (PERI COMES OVER AS GUARDOLIERS HOLD GUNS TOWARDS THEM) Someone'll pay for this!

Episode two's rewrites were just as extensive, showing signs of attempts to rectify gaps in the story's logic. In McCoy's version Brunner survived the storming of the Sanctum, but the rewrite saw him toppled into the Timelash along with an android. Conversely, during the counter-attack, McCoy had Sezon killed, but Saward let him survive, albeit wounded. This amendment paved the way for Sezon to become ruler of Karfel after the defeat of the Borad. Katz was also given a reprieve into episode two.

Two further run-around scenes were taken out: firstly, Peri escaping her Guardolier captor as she is led away from the battle at the Sanctum, and secondly, her recapture and being fitted with the gas cylinder of Mustakozene-80. Again the deletions were because these scenes offered nothing new dramatically.

Tekker's death scene was radically changed. In McCoy's version, the Borad kills Tekker because of his growing ambition and proven record of treachery, but as he dies the Maylin presses a switch releasing the chain holding the Morlox that threatens Peri. The televised rewrite saw the Maylin suffering an uncharacteristic bout of conscience. The Borad kills him in response, but the Morlox's chains are not released, reducing the threat to the Doctor's companion.

The Borad's re-appearance at the end of the story is confused before and after the rewrite, not least because in both versions he has 'miraculously' gained two capable limbs and the power the power to walk. The McCoy treatment had the Borad deciding he does not want to marry Peri after all, but does want to blow up the Gurdell diplomatic mission, restarting the war. Saward's interpretation has the Borad merely wanting to capture the Bandril ambassadors, perhaps so that they can be witnesses to his marriage with Peri. In either case the Borad is armed with little more than two fingers, which seems to offer him little in the way of bargaining power.

DIRECTOR AND TEAM:

As Glen McCoy was the season's least experienced writer, John Nathan-Turner counterbalanced by assigning the story to the most experienced **Doctor Who** Director on his call sheet, Pennant Roberts. This would be Roberts' seventh (and final) **Doctor Who**, having started out by directing *THE FACE OF EVIL* for Philip Hinchcliffe almost ten years earlier.

Since completing *WARRIORS OF THE DEEP* the previous year Roberts had alternated between mainstream work for the BBC, most notably the spy drama *Cold Warrior*, and regional assignments for Welsh independent companies such as Ffilmiau Eryri. At the time of taking on *TIMELASH* he was already rostered to begin work on episodes of the sailing drama *Howard's Way* in 1985.

Pennant Roberts was singularly unimpressed with the scripts he was given. Rough estimates of timing pointed to episode one over-running, while episode two needed at least five minutes of extra material.

Under pressure to get his own Dalek scripts up to the mark, Saward was at first reluctant to commit more time to *TIMELASH*, but when Nathan-Turner sided with the Director he had little choice.

In the main, episode one lost dialogue, while episode two gained padding towards the end of the story, most notably during scenes once the Bandrils have fired their missile, and after the second Borad turned up.

Part one lost the TARDIS corridor scenes entirely, although some of the Doctor's actions to prevent collision with the Kontron Tunnel were moved into the console room. Some of the verbal exchanges between the Doctor and Peri were reworded to make their relationship seem less fractious. Pennant Roberts was especially keen to lose dialogue that made it sound like the two travellers disliked each other, e.g. "The girl is going to give me ulcers".

A major shift was altering the sense of time passing during the story. The original McCoy/Saward version had events unfolding over a number of days, whereas the Script-Editor's second take condensed the plot down to a few hours.

Padding added to episode two included extra dialogue during the siege scenes inside the Sanctum, including a bizarre suggestion that the Timelash might offer a means of escape from their predicament from Vena. Strangely Saward took this opportunity to pare down McCoy's statement that the Doctor had used Kontron crystals during his student days on Gallifrey. Knowing a Kontron crystal could be used only once explained its use against an android rather than the first influx of attacking Guardoliers.

Other deletions included the Doctor deriding the painted image of his third incarnation — "You forget how repellent you used to look", Peri bemoaning that she'll never see Earth again after the Doctor's apparent death, and various insults hurled by the Doctor at the Borad, such as "I thought I'd stumbled into your sewage works".

One curious change was Saward removing McCoy's (or even his own...) explanation as how the Doctor and Herbert had survived



detonation of the Bandril missile. "I'll explain later" hardly replaced, "A bendalypse warhead engaging a field of solid time energy like the TARDIS will inevitably neutralise on the point of impact".

Revised scripts were available in time for the Director's first meeting with his design team. Overseeing sets was Bob Cove. Although this was his first **Doctor Who** as a fully-fledged Designer, he had previously worked as a Design Assistant on the tenth anniversary serial, *THE THREE DOCTORS*. Further newcomers were Kevin Molloy, handling Visual Effects, and Alan Hughes helming input from the Costume Department. Hughes had also done one previous **Doctor Who** as an assistant — *THE TALONS OF WENG-CHIANG* back in 1976.

Looking after Make-up was Vanessa Poulton, for whom this was her third **Doctor Who**, having worked likewise as an assistant on *THE ARK IN SPACE*, *THE INVASION OF TIME* and *THE KEEPER OF TRAKEN*.

Dick Mills and Dave Chapman were, as always, in the seats for Special Sounds and Electronic Effects, but incidental music composition was entrusted to Liz Parker. A long-time member of the Radiophonic Workshop, *TIMELASH* was Liz Parker's first, and only, opportunity to create music for the series, although she had looked after Special Sounds' requirement for *THE STONES OF BLOOD* while Dick Mills was on holiday.

Casting proved a bit problematic for Pennant Roberts, as John Nathan-Turner recalled in his *DWM* memoirs. "We did try to get some extremely well known actresses to play the part of Vena, but many actually turned down the part. No disrespect to Jeananne Crowley, incidentally, [but] I don't think it will surprise you to learn that while well-known performers queue to appear in **Doctor Who**, they usually prefer the role of 'guest baddie' to that of 'guest goodie'."

PAUL DARROW

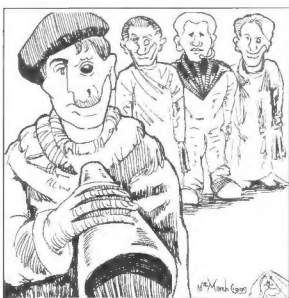
Born on 2 May 1941, Paul Darrow's claim to fame among science fiction fans lies in his four-year stint as Avon, the cynical side-kick who came to dominate *Blake's 7*. Though not initially a science fiction fan, Darrow had previously played Hawkins in *Doctor Who* and the *Silurians* and appeared in *Hammer House of Horror*, and developed a distinct interest in the genre while working on *Blake's 7*. In 1980, he appeared in *The Silver Sky*, a Radio 4 play by *Blake* author Tanith Lee, and cites the works of Lee and Arthur C Clarke as particular favourites. In 1981, he submitted an unproduced script, *Man of Iron*, to *Blake's 7*'s producers for the series' fourth season, and during the late 1980s, he discussed ideas for a *Blake's 7* revival centring on Avon's exile in 'Elba' with Terry Nation. In 1988, he wrote a novel, *A Terrible Aspect*, detailing Avon's early life and ancestry, which revealed his full name to be Kerguelen Avon (meaning revenge), the son of rebel leader Rogue Avon. Darrow's other writing includes the novelisation of the Queen computer game *The Eye* (1996). During the 1990s, he reprised his role as Avon for three audio productions - the fan produced tape *The Logic of Empire* (set many years after the series and utilising script editor Chris Boucher's concept for a fifth season), and two radio plays, *The Sevenfold Crown* and *The Syndeton Experiment*.

Darrow's performance in *TIMELASH* was less than well-received, and in interviews, Darrow admitted he was less than impressed with the script, adding that he saw it as an opportunity to take revenge on Colin Baker, who'd stolen his show with his barn-storming performance as the space pirate Bayban in *Blake's 7* *AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD*.



"...I did not appreciate the style of the performance at my run through some ten days later. It hadn't changed. Paul was asked to underplay it but when we got to studio he'd rehearse it normally, then do the take with his original performance. I don't think we've ever had to retake so many scenes, asking for a less animated performance."

John Nathan-Turner, *DWM* 240, 1996



"Pennant never liked the script and although Saward worked on it to accommodate Pennant's major concerns, I don't think 'Pen' was ever really happy".

John Nathan-Turner, *DWM* 240, 1996

"I was a bit disappointed when I read the script. I remember Eric Saward was a bit defensive about it. He said, 'It's really quite good. Glen McCoy is quite a good writer'. I disagreed and persuaded Eric to do a complete rewrite on it, to make it more lucid"

Pennant Roberts, *DWM* 122, 1987



DAVID ASHTON

Actor and writer David Ashton was the third member of the Granada spoof **Brass** to appear in the twenty-second season of **Doctor Who**. Ashton played Doctor MacDuff in the original two-year run of the Northern comedy, and his cousin Inspector MacDuff in its 1990s revival. In addition to acting, usually in Scottish roles, he also turned his hands to writing in the mid-eighties, contributing scripts to the Bristol-based hospital drama **Casualty**, before scripting the animated secret agent spoof **Freddie as FRO7**, and the TV movie *God on the Rocks*.

TV Appearances:

Brass (MacDuff)
Boon (Mr Parris)
Ever Decreasing Circles
The Heart Surgeon (Gavin Cranmore)
Halifax: Sweet Dreams (Sgt Gibbs)
Hamish Macbeth (Major Roddy)

Film Appearances:

Eye of the Needle (Radio Operator) 1981
Out of Time (Harry/Laurence) 1984
Celia: Child of Terror (Pet Shop Owner) 1988
Indian Summer (Paul Mourner) 1997
Rose Against the Odds (Boss) 1995
Tomorrow Never Dies (First Sea Lord) 1997

Male leads proved a little easier to find. Denis Carey, whom Pennant Roberts had cast as Professor Chronotis in the abortive **SHADA** was happy to play the Borad's human visage, while Paul Darrow, whom Roberts had helped to cast for **Blake's Seven**, accepted the part of Tekker. Roberts cast Darrow precisely because he wanted a reprise of the cold, calculating performance the actor had given for the early **Blake** episodes. He was therefore quite aghast when the actor decided he wanted to play the role as a Lord Olivier-style *Richard III*, complete with hump and staggering gait. John Nathan-Turner was even less amused.

The remainder of the cast was something of a throwback to the Graham Williams era, with star names replaced by a troupe of newcomers playing the various rebels, some of whom would go on to more prominent roles in the future.

Born in on 25 May 1950, **Eric Deacon** made his film debut in the 1973 production *The Sex Thief*, playing Crabshaw. Later roles included parts in *A Nous Les Petites Anglaises* (1975) and **Minder** (Chris in MONDAY NIGHT FEVER). After **TIMELASH**, he played DC Ernie Wilson alongside Colin Blakely in ITV's drama-doc **Operation Julie**. Oliver Deuce in *A Zed and Two Noughts*, Inspector Hardwick in **Lovejoy's** THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMON, and Tony Portman in ITV's 1990 revival of **Maigret**. A later change of career moved him towards writing, including the **INNER CIRCLES** episode of **Prime Suspect IV**.

Veteran **Neil Hallett** (Maylin Renis) has been a regular in **Ghost Squad** as Tony Miller, and played guest roles in **Redcap** (Capt Bane, THE PRIDE OF THE REGIMENT), **The Saint** (Charles Bonner, THE PEOPLE IMPORTERS), **Department S** (Dr Lang, BLACK OUT) and **The Persuaders** (Prentice, THAT'S ME OVER THERE). He also appeared in **The Professionals** (David Hunter, ROGUE) and **Jeeves and Wooster** (Seppings, THE MATCHMAKER). Film roles have included Gerald Amberly in *Virgin Witch* (1972), Unwin in *X The Unknown* (1956), and Alphonse in his screen debut *All for Mary* (1955). Later roles include Hampton in *Keep It Up Downstairs* (1976), Gerry Grimwood in *Can You Keep It Up for a Week?* (1974) and Tony Knight in *A Game for Vultures* (1979).

A year after making **TIMELASH**, Tracy-Louise Ward was cast as the replacement for Rosalyn Landor in TVS' **Gentle Touch** sequel **CATS Eyes**, and played Tessa Robinson for two seasons before the series ended. The scion of a noble family and sister of Rachel Ward, she'd previously won notoriety with a set of arty nude photos, but later returned to her roots by marrying the Marquess of Worcester in 1987 and devoting her life to charitable works.

Jeananne Crowley made her television debut in **The Racing Game**, playing Meg Appleby, and was a regular in the early seasons

of **Tenko** as Nellie Keene. She played Sam Neill's wife in ITV's prestige production **Reilly, Ace of Spies**, and also appeared in the film version of *Educating Rita* and the **INVITATION TO A DYNAMITE PARTY** episode of **Cribb**. In later years she became a writer.

Cast as the Borad, Robert Ashby was the first husband of former companion Louise Jameson. He appeared in **The Professionals** episode **WILD JUSTICE** as a mediator, and played Thiliard in the BBC Shakespeare's production of *Pericles*. Later roles include Robert Badel in *Love Potion* (1987), Toby in *Vol-Au-Vent* (1996), and India's first prime minister Nehru opposite Christopher Lee's controversial portrayal of *Jinnah*.

Apart from Paul Darrow and David Ashton, the most notable of **TIMELASH**'s cast at the time was probably Dicken Ashworth, who'd recently left the Liverpool soap opera *Brookside* after a long stint as Alan Partridge (no relation). He'd previously played tribal chieftain Gunn-Sar opposite Paul Darrow in **Blake's 7**'s **POWER**, and Bardolph in the fantasy film *Krull*. Film roles included Nolan in *Force 10 from Navarone* (1978), Charlie the Chubb in *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square* (1979) and Farmer Groby in Roman Polanski's *Tess* (1979). After **TIMELASH**, he would appear in Brian Blessed's **Return to Treasure Island** as Gavnes, the Sergeant in Terrance Dicks' production of **Oliver Twist**, and Bert in **A Little Princess**. After a four year stint in **Coronation Street**, he renewed his acquaintance with Liverpoolian gloom in Alan Bleasdale's **Love on the Dole** before appearing in Jimmy McGovern's **The Lakes**.



SET DESIGN:

Not the least of **TIMELASH**'s frustrations was that it was a show with little money. Having overspent considerably on **The Two Doctors** and **THE MARK OF THE RANI**, Nathan-Turner was determined to go out with a bang on **REVELATION OF THE DALEKS**, so, the cash remaining for **TIMELASH** was quite small, a fact that Pennant Roberts had cause to bemoan.

One area of agreement among all members of the creative team was that the overall tone of the story should be matt: matt sets, matt costumes, matt make-up and, where possible, matt props from the Effects group.

Despite very tight funds Bob Cove fulfilled his brief to the letter as far as Karfel sets were concerned. The walls, ceilings, buttresses, set dressings and even TV monitor screens were without any hint of any gloss elements. Props buyer Al Huxley had his hands full locating pastel coloured flowers and matt grey drinking goblets.

In the main his sets were timbered flats, painted an opaque cream. To add decoration Cove built on McCoy's suggestion that triangular motifs should be in evidence. Sets like the reception room had uplighters, which



"Our original set designs kept getting sent back and pared down because of lack of money. And that scaling down was, in itself, time-consuming. We'd taken the time on the first draft, so the last one, which the viewers saw, was a bit slapdash".

Pennant Robert, DWM 122, 1987



As Maylin, Renis, and later Tekker, got to wear a black cloak and a matt grey amulet of office as well.

The Guardoliers wore two-piece beige uniforms with sand coloured boots. Their profiles were slimmer due to not having pleated tunics, but instead they wore cowls of bee keeper netting which hung from their circular coolie hats and Velcro attached fully around their shoulders to create a veil obscuring their features

For members of the resistance Alan Hughes designed similarly baggy attire with less shoulder padding but with loose turtle neck collars. For reasons unspecified but probably to do with a need for camouflage these outfits were deep olive-green. Women in the citadel

COSTUME:

In tune with the show's art direction, all the Karfelons wore matt costumes. For male citizens and councillors the baggy look was in fashion. Trousers were a mixture of khaki and cream gabardine with heavy pleating running the full length of the leg down to the ankle cuff buttons. Tunics were also in cream gabardine with elasticised waists. The material was stitched into ranks of thick, pleated folds, which ran from the neckline down to the elbows with shoulder padding sewn in to give a very broad look. Although cut from the same material, folds and pleating were stitched differently for each costume so give their wearers some sense of individuality.

wore mock velvet long gowns, cut from a fabric dyed with autumnal colours of russet, gold and mauve. Vena's outfit even had flecks of gold inlaid and she was allowed to wear (non-shiny) ear-rings.

The script suggested many androids in the complex, but for budget reasons Dean Hollingsworth ended up playing them all. Nevertheless two full android costumes were created, one for Hollingsworth, and one for the Visual Effects dummy which had to be set on fire twice during recording. The basic outfit was a single piece baggy jump-suit cut from a matt white, pink and yellow foam-textured material. The shoulder area was massively padded and around his neck Hollingsworth wore a matt-black wool scarf which hid the gap between his neck and the collar. A wire framed triangular necklet anchored these elements down front and back, out of which sprouted the android's twin microphones (?) and the power cables which ran down to the elbows of both arms. Black slippers completed Costume's contribution to a truly multi-department creation.

The Borad was equally the by-product of three departments. Alan Hughes provided a matt-black canvas material for the costume and had it sewn into a baggy, apparently shapeless, asymmetrical long coat. The aim here was to disguise the creature's true shape: man or amphibian. Daubs of white powder paint were added to the suit to suggest periodic immersion in water. Originally it was intended the Borad would not be seen with legs, but when episode two got padded out with the clone's hostage taking of Peri, Hughes added a pair of long thick socks.

In contrast to her usual revealing attire Nicola Bryant was allowed to wear an outfit of black slacks and a maroon top. Colin Baker was re-united with his full sixth Doctor costume, this time adding a black cat badge to his lapel. For Herbert Alan Hughes provided a period cream three piece suit, which did not seem to fit David Chandler as well during the eventual remount as it did during the **TIMELASH** recording sessions...



shone triangular pools of light towards the ceiling, and translucent blue 'window' panels inlaid with pastel coloured triangle patterns. Even darker sets, like Peri's detention cell, were painted a mottled matt russet and red, with diagonal support beams again giving a triangular look to the whole room.

The two main focuses of dramatic attention were the Inner Sanctum and the Borad's vault. The biggest of these was the Sanctum, with the Timelash gateway prominent on a mounted stage, which ran the length of the back wall. Although decorated with triangular lattices, bas reliefs and other wall illuminations, the main doorway was kept as a simple pair of sliding flats so that damaged replacements could be easily slotted into place, e.g: doors partially blown open, doors fully blown open, etc.

Part of the wall on the right hand side of the set was a painted sheet of toffee-glass. This was so it could be shattered on cue to reveal a hidden painting of the Pertwee Doctor. The painting was given to Bob Cove by John Nathan-Turner who, in turn, had been given it by an American fan painter, Gail Bennett whom the Producer knew well from the U.S convention circuit. Bennett's painting was based on a BBC photograph of the third Doctor from *INVASION OF THE DINOSAURS* and was one of a set the artist hoped BBC Enterprises would be





interested in licensing as posters or post-cards. This version of the painting was itself enlarged and reproduced onto toffee-glass so that it could be smashed by the Doctor to unveil a mirror.

The centrepiece, the Timelash cabinet itself, followed McCoy's ideas precisely: a plinth supporting an isosceles pyramid panel to form the pentagonal design suggested in the script. The front panel could be lifted away by stage hands to reveal an interior lined with foil and metallic coated plastic film onto which bright beams of light, hidden inside the plinth, shone on cue to create sparkles and reflections. Additional unfocussed glittering reflections were superimposed during recording to enhance the endless time corridor illusion.

The Borad's vault was predominantly a three sided chamber with a pair of sliding doors on the left, a control console sunk into the back wall, and a blank wall on the left onto which an image of the old man Borad could be overlaid. Recessed spotlights and a matt concrete décor amplified the sensation of being in an underground bunker. In place of the suggested swimming tank Bob Cove instructed that the set be lit with a blue, softly rippling light denoting water close-by. For episode two Cove designed an elevated rectangular box-shaped set that rode on wheeled scaffolding. This was the crawl-way duct from where Herbert could observe proceedings in the vault below. The front and back sections of this mobile flat could be removed depending on whether the camera needed to show Herbert in the duct, or Herbert's point of view as he looked down into the vault. In both instances these shots would be filmed by a crane mounted camera.

The interior of the Timelash was a separate set built solely for Block Two. Essentially it was a giant wall flat painted matt black and studded with hexagonal, white painted rods of varying thickness, some of which were reinforced wooden beams capable of supporting the weights of David Chandler and Colin Baker. Wads of tinsel, foil and crunched up metallic plastic film were dotted into the set so that it could be made to glitter and sparkle when illuminated by random beams of light from an overhead dance hall 'super trouper' projector.

The power vault, accessible only to the Maylin, was a narrow set, again lit like a bunker with subdued light. The key feature of this set was the concealed inspection panel, which could rise on cue to reveal the red and blue power monitoring columns beyond.

The rebels' encampment and the Morlox tunnels were both assembled using stock elements from a props warehouse. Added to the latter was the gallows post to which Peri would be tied, and some overhead scaffolding for the Effects team to operate the Morlox from out of vision.

Stock flats, props and dressings were also used to create Herbert's Scottish country cabin — the only set to feature any smooth, shiny surfaces. This was a two-part set; the cottage interior linking out through the front door to the veranda outside, and beyond that Herbert's garden and the grassy escarpment where the TARDIS lands. Most of the elements of this set had been used previously in the children's science-fiction drama series *The Tripods*.



MAKE-UP: Paul Darrow got his wig. He didn't get the hump, but he did persuade Vanessa Poulton to supply him with a medieval page-boy hairpiece for his *Richard III* tour-de-force as Tekker.

The rest of the male cast were happy to have their hair Roman cut and waved, although Eric Deacon as Mykros opted to have his slightly longer hair gelled and slicked back. To maintain the matt motif several of the artists, male and female, agreed to have their hair dusted with puffs of matt powder paint to add swatches of colour while muffling any natural shine.

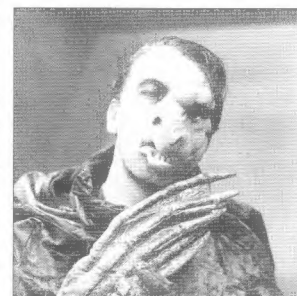
The Karfelon girls wore their hair severely backcombed and layered into waves using a lot of lacquer. Again, sprayed on colouring helped

by training and aptitude, like John Friedlander before him. In particular Mitchell was up-to-speed with the latest developments in foam rubber technology, having worked for the Henson Organisation on productions like *Dark Crystal*.

Between them Poulton and Mitchell costed out making the Borad's amphibious half-face using a new, very fine and very soft, but also very expensive, foam rubber solution. When the Production Unit Manager signed off approval for purchase, Mitchell took a face cast of actor Robert Ashby and produced a sculpture of what the whole creature would look like. From discussions with Kevin Molloy he knew what was being proposed for the Morlox beast and so shaped the jaw profile to match in with that.

The end result was two prosthetic sections so soft and light, and yet firm, they could be glued directly onto Ashby's face without any discomfort. Furthermore the foam rubber was so fine that if the actor crinkled his face, the mask elements would show some of that expression. The jaw section ran from behind the left side of Ashby's neck to the right hand side of his mouth, with Vanessa Poulton then applying layers of textured make-up to hide the seams and blend the colours of the actor's visible face with that of the mask. The facial section, which included an embedded glass eye, attached from the left ear, around the forehead and was anchored to the actor's nose. For her part Poulton ordered a special wig that was slicked back human hair on the right hand side, blending to longer, coarser animal hair as it swept over to the left of Ashby's head.

The Borad's flipper hand was a stiff, leather driving glove split open at the tips and the fingers extended by the attachments of rubber extensions, fashioned by Stan Mitchell, but using a conventional latex rubber. Translucent sheet rubber added webbing between the fingers.

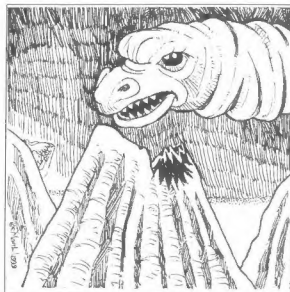


to hid any shiny tendencies.

The two main projects for Make-up were the android and the Borad. Rather than a mask Vanessa Poulton chose to apply a thick layer of foundation, liberally mixed with gooseberry blue powder paint, to the whole of Dean Hollingsworth's face, neck, ears and hands. Even his mouth and tongue were dyed by having the artist gargle with a cochineal mixture prior to recording sessions. Hollingsworth's own hair was slicked down and covered up with an inexpensive wig sprayed bright yellow. The cheapness of this wig worked in the show's favour as the hair, when combed back and lacquered down, revealed the harsh lines of the under-net, presented a consciously artificial look.

The Borad, while sketched out in concept by Poulton, was primarily the result of work done by Stan Mitchell in Visual Effects. Recruited to the BBC in the early Eighties, Mitchell was nominally an Effects Designer, but in reality, he was a sculptor and prosthetics specialist





VISUAL EFFECTS:

Officially Kevin Molloy had just one Effects Assistant allocated for this show, Paul Mann, but in reality he was able to draw on help from Stan Mitchell for specialist areas such as the Borad and the Bandril ambassador. In Glen McCoy's script the ambassador was intended to be played by an actor. It was a burst of inspiration during a production meeting that envisaged saving an actor's fee by having the ambassador — who is only ever seen on a monitor screen — represented by a glove puppet voiced by one of the actors already cast in a support role. Hence Martin Gower, suddenly found his engagement time extended to providing a series of pre-recorded voice overs for the puppeteer to work to.

The cobra-like head and neck of the Bandril was sculpted by Mitchell and cast with the remainder of the soft foam solution. After all, the **Doctor Who** Production Office had picked up the bill for buying this product in the first place.

Two model sets were needed for the show; an establishing shot of the citadel on Karfel, and space footage of the attacking Bandril fleet. Molloy applied for funding to shoot these scenes on film at Visual Effects but,

due to the tight budget, was advised these would have to be recorded in studio. The Karfel landscape was a simple triangular table-top model; wide at the broad end of the wedge so the camera could track along its length, but narrow at the back to engender a sense of false perspective. The citadel itself was a square-based pyramid (the triangle motif again) with linking lights on the summit, sat on a lunar-like landscape, with a caption slide of a space backdrop added in by CSO during recording.

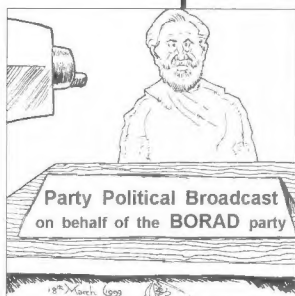
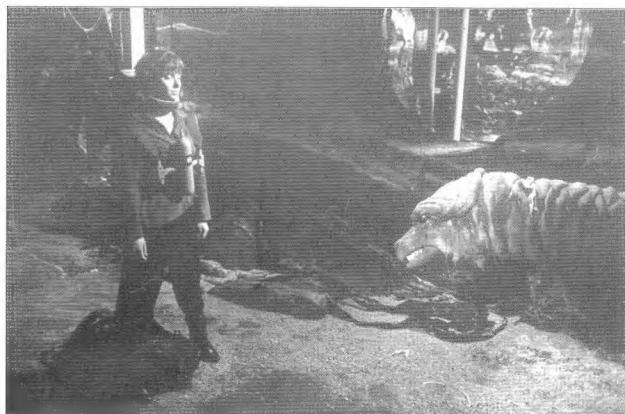
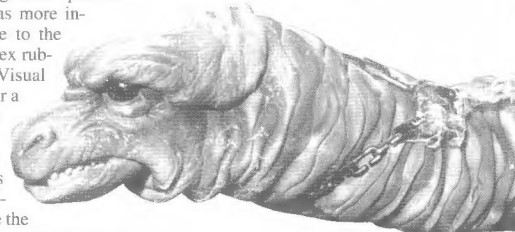
The Bandril ship was reminiscent of the flying Martian war machines in George Pal's *The War of the Worlds*. The primary hull comprised two squared-off wings, thin at the wing tips but fattening out in the middle to accommodate the warhead launcher. A dropped vertical fin extending from the stern probably aided atmosphere flight. The brief was to show three such battle cruisers, but without filming and backwinding the camera this would have been difficult and time consuming to do in the electronic studio, so only one ship was ever seen. The missile, a plain cylindrical pod, fired from the ship by shooting the vessel pointing downwards, and dropping the device through its hollow launch tube.

Live action sessions called for a whole raft of Effects supplied props. The Borad's chair was a specially moulded and cast fibre-glass item, which ran on castors attached to wires painted to make them invisible against the floor colouring. A stage hand, pulling on the wire, could move the chair in any lateral direction, while Robert Ashby himself could rotate the chair using his foot during close-up shots.

The Morlox prop was more ingenious. The part visible to the cameras was a hollow latex rubber sleeve, sculpted by Visual Effects, and mounted over a wire armature. Two wires on a rack and pinion pivot ran from the head back to the unseen Visual Effects Operators. By pulling either wire they could make the head turn slightly left or right. The head was supported from a harness around the neck attached to a ceiling fixed wire. When the Morlox was restrained (e.g. the one menacing Peri), this harness was visible to the camera. In other shots, it was not.

Kevin Molloy's team were responsible for supervising the dummy version of the android during the two scenes where it had to be shown burning. Other specialist props built for this story included the time web bazooka with its detachable mounting bracket and gunnery position, the gas cylinder harness for Peri, the neck loops which had to be hinged working props, a flashing lights back pack and head unit for the old man robot, and the usual requirement for guns and communicators.

The department also furnished skeletons for the various ageing sequences from stock.



PRODUCTION DIARY:

Wednesday 21 November — Monday 3 December 1984 No rest for the regulars as Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant join the *TIMELASH* cast for a preliminary read-through less than twenty-four hours after wrapping *THE MARK OF THE RANI*. This first day centres around the actors reading their lines, scripts in hand, to work out their inter-relationships and some of their timings. It is here that Pennant Roberts gets his first inkling of how difficult Paul Darrow intends to be.

Among the cast is Christine Kavanagh, who has the brief role of Aram. Originally Glen McCoy had this role down to be played by a male actor but, just as he had done in the past, Pennant Roberts has restructured this part for an actress.

Wednesday 21st is the only day when Colin Baker, Nicola Bryant and John Nathan-Turner are free to attend rehearsals this week. For the next four days Pennant Roberts will have to rehearse without them as they journey over to the States to attend the second big *Spirit of Light Doctor Who* convention in Chicago over the Thanksgiving weekend. There they are joined by Peter Davison, Jon Pertwee, Patrick Troughton and a host of companions for the huge three-day event, which, again, attracts an audience thousands strong. Bryant, Baker and Nathan-Turner return on an eight o'clock flight on Sunday evening which gets them back to London early on Monday morning to begin a solid week of rehearsals.

Tuesday 4 December 1984

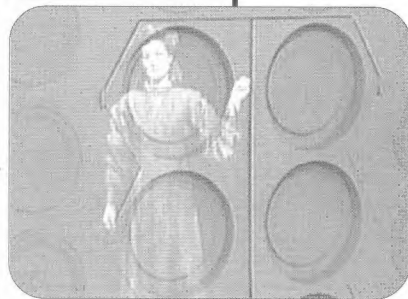
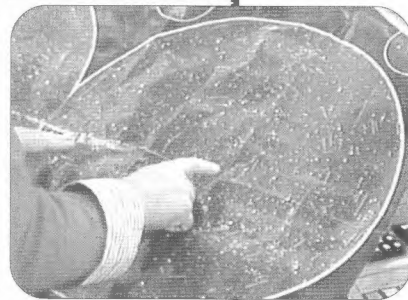
First day in the studio for the *TIMELASH* cast, beginning the first of two three-day recording blocks, the extra day making up for the absence of any pre-filmed material. The venue for this first session is TC4, one of the narrow, rectangular studios in Television Centre. This does not really matter as only major set is needed; the council's Inner Sanctum. Other sets erected for these three days are the reception lounge, Peri's detention cell, the TARDIS interior and a variety of citadel corridors.

Very few of the cast are in attendance today as the only scenes rostered are the TARDIS interiors and any scenes in the reception lounge that can be fitted in before ten o'clock.

Recording commences at 19:30 with Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant hogging most of the early scenes as the action unfolds in story order. Some effects are done real time — a panel on the console exploding, colour, digital patterns fed to a monitor to represent the Kontron Tunnel, etc. — while others, like the time distorting wobble, will be done in post-production.

Vena is the first member of the cast needed, for her ghostly pass-through of the TARDIS as she travels down the Kontron Tunnel. Doing this shot entails synchronising action aboard the TARDIS with Jeananne Crowley as she stands motionless in a black draped area while a camera tracks around her, recording an image to superimpose over live action in the TARDIS.

David Chandler is the next artist called, for the actor's first appearance in front of TV cameras. All of his TARDIS scenes are captured before the reception room set is lit for the last four scenes of the day. Paul Darrow, Dean Hollingsworth, James Richardson and, fleetingly, Tracy Louise Ward join Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant to record five minutes worth of uncomplicated material, all of which is destined for part one. Despite the simplicity of these scenes, some retakes are requested due to Darrow's insistence on playing *Richard III*. Nevertheless the day completes in advance of ten o'clock.





Wednesday 5 December 1984
Day Two concentrates on a lot of the non-mechanical effects based scenes set in the Inner Sanctum. Pennant Roberts' preference, as per other *Doctor Who* stories done to date, is to shoot material in story order wherever possible, and so the first scene of the day is the banishing of Tyheer and Gazak into the Timelash.

Almost the entire cast is assembled today, the only ones missing being Robert Ashby and some of the rebels. The Director's aim is to shoot as much of episode one's Sanctum scenes as he can during the afternoon session, and some of the surrounding sets during the evening.

Shooting the Timelash in action requires very precise co-ordination and support from some of the other technical teams. Lighting is key. As the machinery is activated displays on the control console props around the obelisk begin to pulse with energy. A rollback and mix fades out the Timelash front panel to reveal the inner cabinet blazing with bright, sparkling lights — in reality bright, halogen bulbs flaring off the reflective surfaces inside. The main Sanctum lights are faded down just as orange spotlights come up to illuminate the

area behind the Timelash cabinet. An out-of-vision wind machine is turned on at low power to ripple the hair and clothes of those artists nearest to the cabinet and blue strobing super-trouser beams roll

across the set. Another roll-back and mix following a victim tumbling into the cabinet achieved the necessary disappearances. The slight halo around the cabinet's portal is added in Post-Production by Dave Chapman.

Appearances by the Borad's old man image on the Sanctum's scanner screen were done real time by mixing a head and shoulders image of Denis Carey standing on the black draped set, on to the wall, a soft-edge generator adding the blue halo around his picture.

Once Carey has finished his scenes the police box prop is manoeuvred into the black drape area so various tracking and zoom shots of the TARDIS can be captured. These will be electronically

matted on to the live action scene as Tekker realises the Doctor's ship is returning to Karfel. The police box prop is not therefore moved on to the Sanctum set until its moment of materialisation — another rollback and mix shot.

Scenes of Tekker, the Doctor and other councillors talking to the Bandril ambassador are all accomplished without the presence of the puppet, with the actors are talking to the blank scanner wall. Off camera Martin Gower reads his role as the snake-headed alien into a microphone.

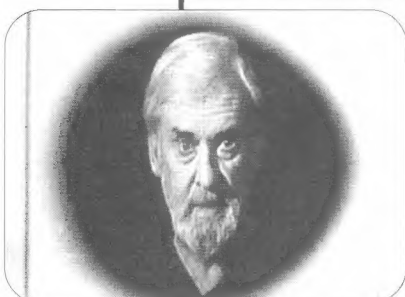
While some of these exchanges are going on the TARDIS prop is moved out into the corridor just beyond the Sanctum for recording of the last two scenes before dinner. These are the Doctor setting off to intercept the Bandril missile in part two, and his return with Vena just before the episode one cliff-hanger.

These scenes are completed after dinner, paving the way for the part one climax to follow; the standard end of episode close-up on Colin as he faces being thrown into the Timelash.

The fight scene as the rebels capture the Sanctum and eject Tekker and his minions, is the first set piece of the story; a sequence that requires several takes before Pennant Roberts is happy he has all the action shots he wants. Kevin Molloy is kept busy during these takes — setting and priming the electrically fired flash charges in the Karfelon guns. Once this is complete several of the actors, including Bryant, Darrow, Scott and Ashton, are released for the day.

The remainder of the evening is taken up recording, firstly, the Doctor's entry into the Timelash (from the Sanctum 'side' only), and secondly, his construction of a defence against the counterattack that he knows will be coming. These scenes are mostly mundane. The only significant technical tricks are insert shots of the Doctor vanishing and appearing using his Kontron crystal, and a black drape/CSO shot of Katz passing her hand through the ghost image of the Doctor.

With a little time remaining before ten o'clock Pennant Roberts sets up and shoots some of the brief corridor scenes of the Guardoliers assembling and priming their bazooka for the assault on the Sanctum.





Thursday 6 December 1984 Recording begins again at 14:30 with a continuation of the assault scenes begun on Monday. The firing of the bazooka is done in four stages with pauses for stage hands to swap over the door flats. Take one is the gun firing at a fully intact door, take two against a door with a small hole punched in it, take three against a bigger hole, and take four with a gap big enough for Guardoliers to pass through.

To fill in time between these takes Roberts records some 'as directed' insert shots of various characters running, fighting or firing guns. The main battle follows these inserts, another rigorously choreographed action sequence that culminates in the dummy android being placed in position and set alight as required. Due to strict fire safety regulations, the dummy is only allowed to burn for a scant few seconds — just long enough for its rollback and mix disappearance — until it is extinguished. At the end of this scene the dummy is carefully repackaged for storage. It will be needed again in Block Two.

The remainder of the afternoon sees Pennant Roberts pulling together the remaining Sanctum scenes up to and including the Bandrils advising that the TARDIS has been lost.

The Borad's surprise appearance is left till after dinner, although in reality Robert Ashby is fed and in Make-up long before the break due to the time it takes fitting his prosthetics. The Doctor's final tussle with the Borad is a single scene, which runs for several minutes, and a few takes are recorded before the Director is happy. Nevertheless the relative simplicity of this scene means there is time to complete all the remaining minor citadel corridor scenes still outstanding. Mostly these are short sequences, such as Peri being dragged along by a neck brace.

Along with the last scene on the schedule are the few short scenes of Peri in the detention cell. Although these are uncomplicated and shot on a simple two-sided set, ten o'clock creeps up all too fast, and the very last scene is left unrecorded. The detention cell will need to be remounted for Block Two.



Friday 7 — Tuesday 18 December 1984 Back to the 'Acton Hilton' for two week's of rehearsals preparing for Block Two. The cast for second studio is slimmed down as most of the extras playing Karkelons and Guardoliars are not required.

It's a tough couple of weeks for Nicola Bryant and Colin Baker. In addition to daytime responsibilities with TIMELASH they, and John Nathan-Turner, need to attend evening rehearsals for the Producer's forthcoming pantomime *Cinderella*, which is due to run throughout the festive season at Southampton. Jacqueline Pearce is booked to play one of the Ugly Sisters for the production that will take place between studio sessions for TIMELASH and REVELATION OF THE DALES.

Wednesday 19 December 1984

Block Two has been allocated studio TC8, which is a slightly smaller and squarer facility than TC4. Hence, Bob Cove has designed smaller sets for this recording block than for the first studio.

As befits day one of a three-day schedule, today has only one recording session to complete, running from 19:30 till 22:00.

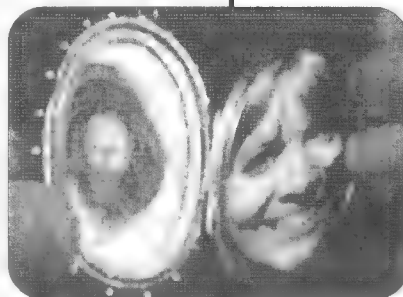
The left-over detention cell scene featuring Peri is wrapped up before attention switches to the composite cabin and garden set where Vena first n Coefy's wish to depict H.G.Wells' Effects has constructed a special ouija board with a metal rimmed glass apparently capable of moving by itself. In truth the glass is moved by an Effects Assistant, hidden under the table, who is sliding and rotating a magnet beneath the shiny table-top.

After these three scenes are complete the Director moves his cameras over to the tunnel part of the cave set where Nicola Bryant is paused ready to commence the first of several scenes involving her screaming at the Morlox monster. Aware that these scenes, with the possibility of several retakes, can be straining on the lungs, Pennant Roberts has split these sequences, while planning in some contingency for day three in case he judges her day one screams to be less than convincing. He need not worry; Nicola Bryant turns in a tour-de-force performance despite the object of her terror being a tube of latex rubber swinging around on a length of chain.

Next, taking a break from shrieking, Nicola Bryant moves to join Sezom, Katz and the remaining rebels over in the encampment area of the caves for Peri's interrogation by the suspicious insurgents. The locket prop worn by Katz contains a small black and white BBC photograph of Katy Manning as Jo Grant taken during a publicity photocall for *DAY OF THE DALEKS* in 1971. The scene runs right through until the ambush by the Guardoliers.

Eric Deacon and Neil Hallett take over next, playing out their episode one dialogue both inside and outside the power vault. This set is a partial reuse of the detention cell with the power valves and control console unit wheeled in to mask off the left-hand call door. During recording Hallett accidentally snaps off the power valve control, but carries on without fuffing his lines. As the scene is quite long and shown good performances otherwise, Roberts elects not to reshoot. The ten o'clock deadline is looming anyway.

Peri's rescue from the Morlox beast closes the day, accompanied by dry ice and yet more screaming.





Post-production) is taped in close-up using a locked off camera. The victim then has a layer of ageing make-up applied plus an older, wispier white-haired wig. This shot too is recorded by the locked off camera. Finally Effects are brought in to substitute the artist for a skeleton dressed in identical clothes. The skeleton is initially shot fully upright, supported on wires from an overhead gantry. On cue the wires are released, allowing the skeleton to crumble to the floor. Robert Ashby's counterpart, Denis Carey, is present too. The majority of his scenes are recorded solo on the black drape set for later matting in during Post-production, but he is allowed a brief spot on the live action set, perfecting his robot walk with boxes of flashing lights attached to his back and head.



Herbert's vantage point is a small box-like set raised high on scaffolding that can only be shot from a pedestal floor camera aiming upwards or a crane-mounted camera viewing downwards over David Chandler's shoulder. Depending which point-of-view is called for either the back wall of the box set or the front bay unit is removed. Down below, the Doctor's double-trouble performance using his Kontron Crystal relies simply on performing the same scene twice, back-winding both recorders and mixing the output to create a single multiple-image composite. By and large the vault scenes are shot in story order, so for the afternoon session Robert Ashby is not required to wear his full face mask, as the camera shoots him from behind. That is applied after lunch ready for his confrontation scenes with the Doctor.



Thursday 20 December 1984 Day two is Borad day. Apart from a few cutaway scenes featuring Herbert in the viewing gallery above the creature's vault, everything recorded today will be set inside, or just beyond, the Karfel ruler's domain.

As there are no less than four ageing to death effects scenes to do, including that of the first Borad himself, the creative team has chosen to keep the stunts easy and relatively quick to achieve. The victim's look of horror as he/she/it is caught in the time web beam (which will be added during

Post-production) is taped in close-up using a locked off camera. The victim then has a layer of ageing make-up applied plus an older, wispier white-haired wig. This shot too is recorded by the locked off camera. Finally Effects are brought in to substitute the artist for a skeleton dressed in identical clothes. The skeleton is initially shot fully upright, supported on wires from an overhead gantry. On cue the wires are released, allowing the skeleton to crumble to the floor. Robert Ashby's counterpart, Denis Carey, is present too. The majority of his scenes are recorded solo on the black drape set for later matting in during Post-production, but he is allowed a brief spot on the live action set, perfecting his robot walk with boxes of flashing lights attached to his back and head.

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Friday 21 December 1984 No

less than five sets are scheduled for recording around today, but the afternoon block belongs to just one — the interior of the Timelash itself. In reality the set does not occupy that much studio space. Essentially it is just a series of large scenery flats clamped together into a gently curving cyclorama to give it extra rigidity when upright. The flats are supported by scaffolding, angled slightly and have mattresses positioned below in case of accidents. Above the set two pairs of Kirby wire harnesses have been set up to take the weights of Colin Baker and David Chandler.

McCoy's script has the Doctor alone suspended by a rope, but for safety's sake both actor's will be securely strapped into their invisible wire supports. For Colin Baker this is the third story in a row where he has to endure the discomfort of this contraption.

Brilliant white spotlights illuminate the set to bring out the brightly painted spars and the tufts of glitter. Strobing lights also play across the cyclorama and a wind machine gently blows as scenes of the Doctor grabbing a Kontron crystal and his subsequent "rescue" by Herbert are played out.

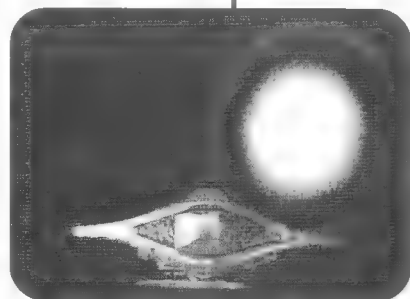
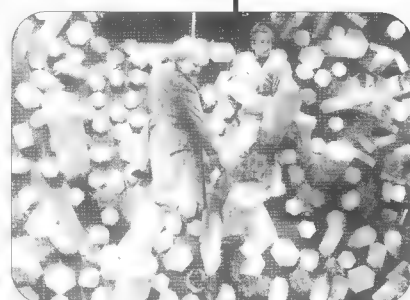
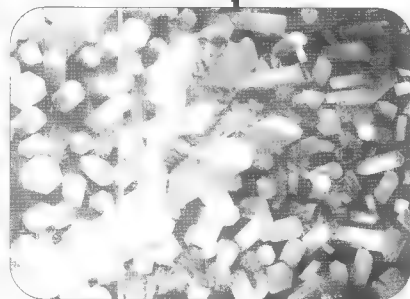
After dinner the evening is split between finishing off a few

outstanding corridor scenes and doing all of the model work for both episodes. The live action material all revolves around Peri; the attempts to capture her in the citadel in part one, her ensuring flight to the doorway to the tunnels, and her wandering around in the tunnels alone prior to her first encounter with the Morlox. Finally Pennant Roberts shoots brief shots of Peri being herded along by her Guardolier captor for yet another encounter with a Morlox — this time for episode two.

The actors are all released early so that the last hour can be devoted to model and effects footage. Bandril ambassador inserts for the monitor screen are recorded first as these are essential to the plot. The puppet is operated by a member of the Effects crew who moves the creature's jaw in synch with Martin Gower's pre-recorded lines. The puppet is shot against a small model stage, most of which will be masked out in Post-production.

Radar screen readouts showing the approach of the Bandril fleet are special microcomputer generated sequences provided by the BBC's Graphics unit. This footage is transferred to tape before, finally, the exterior Karfel landscape and Bandril assault force miniatures are recorded to close the day.

Production on TIMELASH concludes ahead of deadline on Day Three, but even before he sees a rough off-line edit of the completed serial, Pennant Roberts knows he has problems.





POST-PRODUCTION:

The Gallery-only day was a busy one as there were a lot of electronic matte shots to manipulate. As the TARDIS scenes were first to be shot during recording, all images on the screen had to be lifted from other tapes and laid over the blue screen. The same process was applied to material seen on the Inner Sanctum's monitor and on the Borad's spy screen.

The 'Paintbox' digital processing system was employed for electronically masking off areas around ray gun effects. Primarily this enhanced beams fired from the Borad's time web guns — the bazooka and the device on his own chair. The pulsing beams of light were oscillations from a pattern generator, similar but less colourful than those shown on the TARDIS screen to represent the Kontron tunnel. 'Paintbox' was then used to shape a transparent conical mask from the gun muzzle to its target. By electronically uncovering the area inside the mask with a wipe the beams could be shown 'travelling' towards their target. 'Paintbox' also enabled Dave Chapman to seamlessly edit split-screen footage of the Timelash together so that victims could be shown shimmering and vanishing as they were plunged into its maw. By blurring the pixels around the split-screen seam Chapman created a faint glow around the mouth of the device as it was used.

Another image processing system, known as 'Harry', was used to create the wobble seen inside the TARDIS as it heads towards the Tunnel. Like Quantel it could manipulate frames of data, but its memory was much larger, enabling whole sequences of action to be

digitally skewed.

Quantel itself was used for zooming into and positioning the TARDIS police box as it first arrives on Karfel. Unfortunately Pennant Roberts noticed that the insert footage of the TARDIS had the doors pointing right as it materialised, while the prop seen in the studio had its doors facing forwards. Consequently he added a quick reaction shot from the watchers in between the arriving and the arrived shots of the TARDIS to avoid the error being too noticeable to viewers.

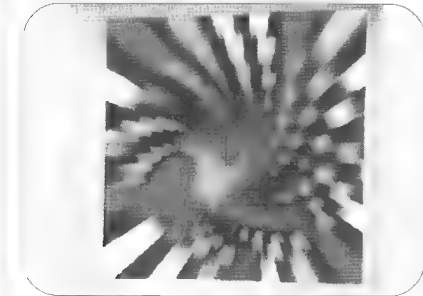
At the off-line editing sessions it became apparent to the Director that the episodes were severely unbalanced. Episode one was nearly seven minutes over-long, while part two was short by nearly five minutes. Examining his material Pennant Roberts proposed changing the cliffhanger to the Guardoliers' attack on the rebel encampment. He suggested judiciously editing in some reaction shots to suggest that the soldiers had shot Peri rather than Katz.

John Nathan-Turner vetoed his suggestion, wanting to keep the traditional end-of-episode close-up on the Doctor. His proposal was for Roberts to consider recording several extra minutes of new material during story six's first recording block.

The upshot was Eric Saward being asked to write several new pages of script for TIMELASH in January 1095. The only practical set he could use during REVELATION OF THE DALEKS was the TARDIS interior, and budget limits would only run to affording the re-engagement of one actor.

Saward wrote a six-minute TARDIS scene featuring the Doctor and Herbert, pegged to slot in between their setting off in the ship and the destruction of the Bandril missile. David Chandler was booked to attend some of the rehearsal days for REVELATION OF THE DALEKS, and extra time was allocated to that story's first studio to accommodate the remount.

The padding scene was recorded on Wednesday 30 January 1985 in studio eight at Television Centre. Pennant Roberts helmed the 45-minute session although wardrobe and make-up duties were supervised by the Dalek story teams. Recording began at 11:30, usually the start of camera rehearsals on a standard four-part story day one in studio, and was completed by 12:15. Colin Baker's costume and cat badge were matched successfully, but the actor's hair had grown slightly over the Christmas/New Year period and was noticeably more ruffled than on the original shoot.



MUSIC AND SOUND:

The only woman ever to score incidental music for **Doctor Who**, Liz Parker joined the BBC as a stage manager in the mid-1970s. She had studied music and recording at the University of East Anglia, and joined the Corporation with the express wish of working in the Radiophonic Workshop if a vacancy ever came up. That happened in 1978 when she was invited to do a seconded 'on attachment' stint at the Maida Vale studios, mainly to provide cover over the holiday season. Indeed one of her earliest assignments that August was producing all the special sound effects for **THE STONES OF BLOOD** while Dick Mills was away.

On the strength of her **Doctor Who** 'audition' she was invited back the Workshop on a permanent basis in November 1978 to take on the mammoth job of producing special sound for **Blake's 7** in the wake of Richard Yeoman-Clark's departure. She continued right through all the remaining seasons of **Blake**, getting the opportunity to compose incidental music tracks on some stories as well.

During the early Eighties her biggest challenge was a natural history series, **The Living Planet**, and it was in the wake of that programme that she was offered TIMELASH.

Liz Parker composed and arranged all the cues for TIMELASH on one of the Workshop's oldest machines, the PPG Synthesiser, previously the sole preserve of Brian Hodgson. Having produced very lyrical themes for **The Living Planet** Parker admitted to rebelling somewhat and producing a very brash, bold and strikingly forceful soundtrack for TIMELASH, almost as a breath of fresh air.

"I do remember positively enjoying it" she told Austen Atkinson-Broadbent for DWM 203. "It was just so ridiculous; those huge, clanking sounds which came off the synthesiser I was using at the time. It's dead now — defunct — but at the time the PPG was a wonderful machine, very creative and way ahead of any other synthesiser... The sound library, the samples and the combination of the samples with the analogue synthesiser meant that it had a vast range of sounds, all of which were used on TIMELASH."

"The signal to noise ratio was brilliant. I'd obviously recorded it very high so it really builds up."

In all Liz Parker composed just over 25 minutes of music

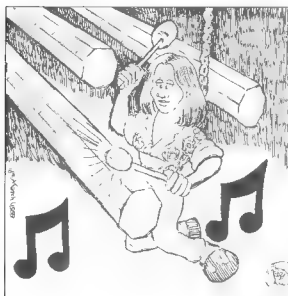
cues for the story, ten minutes for part one and fourteen for episode two.

Special sounds on this serial were a combination of library stock, Radiophonic effects and some manipulation of voices done in the studio during recording. The android's voice was a mixture of vocal dexterity by Dean Hollingsworth — alternating his lines so that one syllable was spoken high-pitch, the next low and so on — the resulting voice track then being processed through a rapidly oscillating ring modulator to give it a tinny, slightly whirring sound.

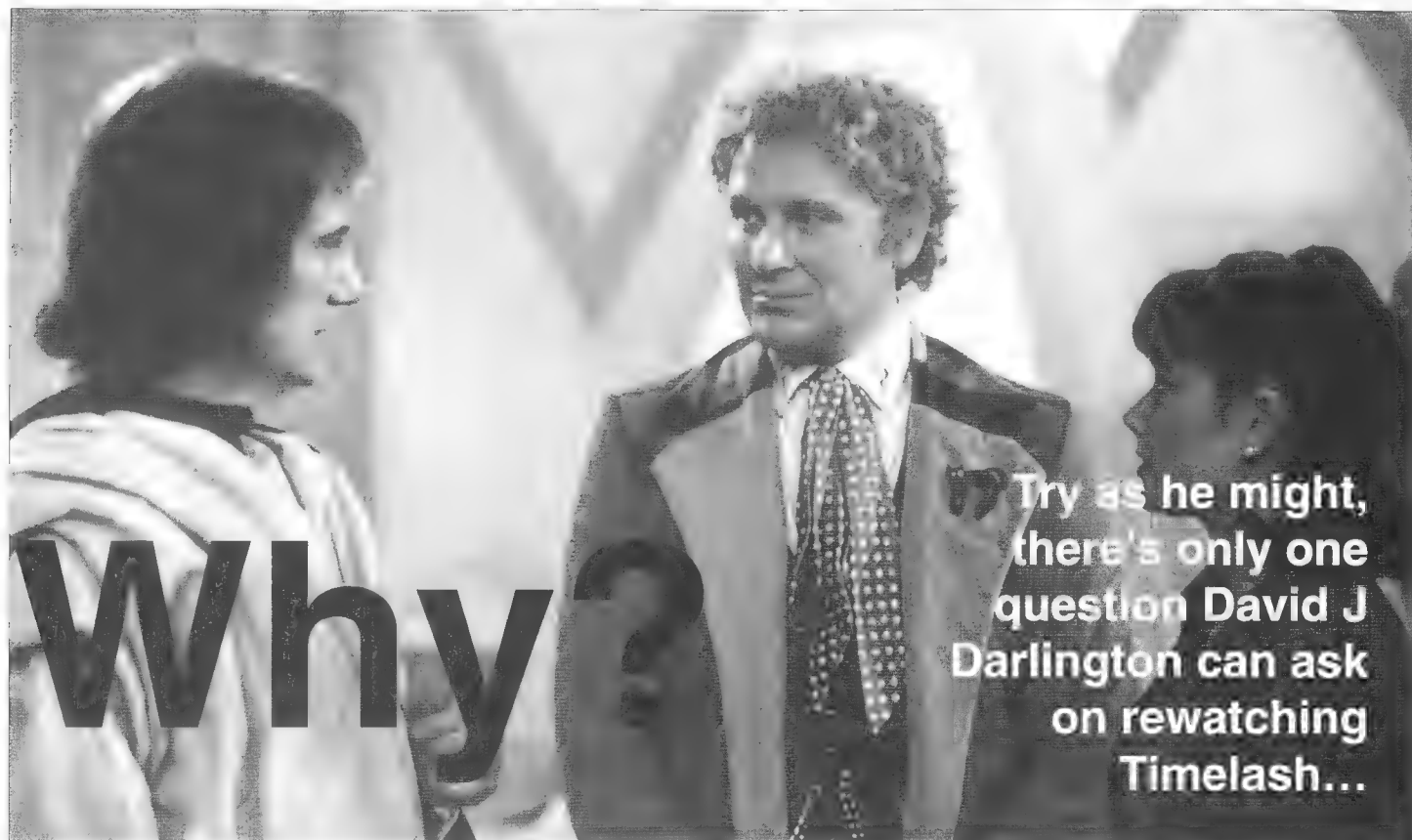
By contrast the Borad's voice was treated to add emphasis to the bass sounds. All scenes set in the creature's underground vault were additionally enhanced with a deep reverberation to add to its air of menace. Echo was added to all of the scenes set inside the Timelash.

From the Radiophonic Workshop's stock library Dick Mills pulled out some standard explosion sounds for the destruction of the Timelash, and re-used Aggedor's roar from the Peladon sagas to give the Morlox a convincing growl.

One bit of fun was Mills deliberately speeding up Peri and the Doctor's voices during their encounter with the Kontron Tunnel.







A difficulty in reviewing

TIMELASH so many years later is that all of its flaws are so obvious on-screen that virtually every commentator noted them in 1985. **TIMELASH** is not **EARTHSHOCK** — its problems are not obscured by a slick production. They're agonisingly visible in every shot.

And while **TIMELASH** is undoubtedly a very poor piece of television, it doesn't have the saving grace of camp — either unintentional or self-aware — which often adds enjoyment to lacklustre material. It would be stretching a point to describe **TIMELASH** as cynical, but it's certainly sadly uninspired. As a television production, **TIMELASH** has two serious problems — it is the perfect example of that rare, but inevitable thing, a production where everything goes wrong at once, but even before that it was, almost certainly, the least ambitious **Doctor Who** story ever mounted. And since it has

the very shaky distinction of apparently not even being about anything in particular, those are serious problems indeed.

Not about anything? Well, obviously it has some narrative structure — albeit one with barely enough incident for a short story. A society — of all of 500 citizens, as we're clumsily told — is under the oppressive rule of a dictator, and the Doctor helps them to rise up and overthrow him. There are some additional details of course, but basically **TIMELASH** conforms exactly to the template Andrew Cartmel later worked so hard to avoid — it's about a society rather than people, a society being a difficult thing to depict in two under-funded 45 minute episodes, particularly when that society is rather underpopulated with actual characters. **TIMELASH** features unusually few extras, but while every character is named, few of them are memorable enough to connect a face or character to that name.

Okay, so **TIMELASH** has a weak, unoriginal concept. However, if you add a mutated ruler desperately seeking a mate, the use of exile in history as punishment and the possibility of war with a neighbouring race, it's not intrinsically bad. Directed with the style of **EARTHSHOCK** or **REVELATION OF THE DALEKS**, it might have been fair to middling. But given the uninterested treatment it gets...

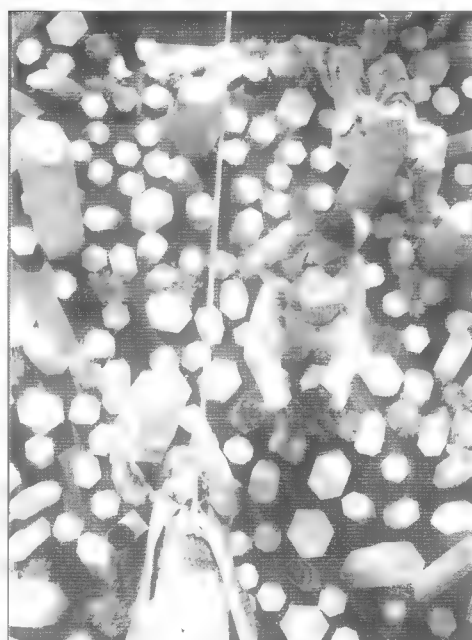
The opening scene is one overlong squabble too many between the leads. Up to this point in this particular season, the bickering had been just about acceptable, but it's in **TIMELASH** that it finally becomes motiveless bitching. This opening scene could have been dropped completely with no loss of dramatic content and to allow the show as a whole to open with a more relevant, interesting scene, such as the immediately subsequent chase, which has "rebels" — as they are unimaginatively called throughout — pursued by guards. The subsequent **TARDIS** interior scene makes no reference to the first at all — re-emphasising the redundancy of that opening scene — but is at least necessary, as it introduces the time tunnel which gets the Doctor and Peri involved in the action. Naturally, since this is the mid-1980s, they can't simply arrive somewhere without getting buffeted about a bit first.

So far, so bland. But from this unpromising beginning, things get progressively worse — we are then introduced to the council of the planet of Karfel, who chat to each other in that expository way that only

characters in the opening moments of a bad drama really can. We hear of the evil tyrant Borad and his video-screen public appearances, the neighbouring Bandrils, and the Borad's time experiments, without anyone ever pausing to say that they know all this already, as might be expected. The costumes are bland, the sets dull and uninteresting, the characters for the most part caricature and physically indistinguishable.

And then Paul Darrow walks in. In a production in which each performance seems to belong to a different show to all the others, Darrow's is quite the most astonishing in having no roots in reality whatsoever. Again though, this isn't in a campy entertaining fashion, but in the way of an actor having far too much fun at the expense of the show which is paying his wages.

Then the point of total collapse is reached — as the **TIMELASH** itself becomes the centre of attention. Since it's made of tinsel and flashing lights, one could have forgiven virtually anyone for turning off at this point and



thinking that Michael Grade had made the right decision in dropping the show. Yes, one can excuse a low budget if the script and performances — not to mention the ingenuity of design — attempt to transcend the limitations, but if the script and performances are half-hearted and the director is forced to distract us with glitter and flashing colours, then incredulity and ridicule must inevitably result.

Only the power room scene, early in episode one, comes close to impressing. It's certainly the first scene which actually advances the narrative — the early despatch of rebels is merely illustration of the Borad's power, which we have already been alerted to — and is, for the most part, reasonably well written; a convincing argument between two characters, fairly well performed, and observed by a mysterious eavesdropper. Neil Hallett as Renis is acceptable if bland, and Eric Deacon as Mykros is really wasting a lot of effort, trying his damndest to make this work. This could even have served as a good opening scene for the whole story — it renders all the earlier exposition redundant as well. But even this scene falls apart when the power is switched on — activating, as it does, more tinsel and more synchronised flashing lights.

And just as you think it absolutely cannot get any worse, the Bandril ambassador shows up.

Why? So budget-keeping dictated the use of an unconvincing muppet, but having tried it and realised it

didn't work at all, why didn't someone abandon the idea and replace it with the actor's voice over a Bandril emblem on the viewscreen, for instance?

"Why" and "how?" are the questions which dominate any analysis of *TIMELASH* — in terms of both storyline and production. Why was it necessary for the Doctor to have visited there before, since it has virtually no connection to the plot? How did the Borad take control of the citadel, and how did he get away with banning mirrors, of all things? Why spend ages chasing after Vena and the missing amulet when the power supply then fulfils no role in the plot, other than to introduce Herbert into the action? Why...

The questions just flow on: Where did the time corridor come from? Is the Timelash means of execution, or does it merely exile the victim? How did the Doctor manage to survive using his TARDIS as a barrier to deflect the Bandril weapon? How come Bandril, Karfel's "neighbouring planet", is in another solar system? Is Karfel a planet or a city? Why doesn't the Borad wonder where Herbert's gone after he watches him accompany the Doctor to their meeting? How and why did the Borad clone himself and why was this left unexplained until the end? The answer to these and many other questions is, in the immortal words which Steven Moffat gave a starring role in *DOCTOR WHO* AND THE CURSE OF FATAL DEATH, "I'll explain later". And inevitably, no-one does.

It's just feasible that even with everything else wrong with *TIMELASH*, it might just have struggled through as "acceptable" had it been directed with any feel for pace. The action sequences are flat, with characters running across the sets to hit their mark before opening fire on their enemies, and in terms of the unfolding of the plot, it takes forever for anything to happen.

And if the design was bad in part one, quite the worst set in *Doctor Who*'s long history pops up right at the start of part two. For reasons that are — again — not made entirely clear even in retrospect, the Doctor decides he has to dive into the Timelash device to retrieve two Kontron crystals (Why only two? And if they need "delicate handling", why does he just cram them into his pocket before being hoisted back up?) What Pennant Roberts and designer Bob Cove hoped to achieve with this is a mystery — Vena claims the Doctor is "dangling on the edge of oblivion", but oblivion is clearly made of tinsel and flashing lights, and bits of polystyrene held together with quite visible tape.

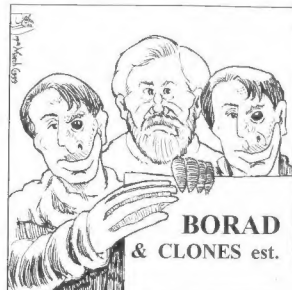
Maybe I was wrong — maybe *TIMELASH* is simply a cynical attempt to fill 90 minutes of airtime with the least expenditure possible. However, it's not cynical in the opportunistic fashion of *THE CHASE* or *THE DOMINATORS*. It's "Joe Public never clocks a damn thing" cynicism. In a recent interview, Chris Boucher quoted director Pennant Roberts as having once said, mid-production, "it's only television". Never before or since in *Doctor Who* has "it's only television" summed up the ethos of a story so succinctly. Like the Bandril ambassador, that Timelash interior set should never have reached the screen, no matter how much or how little money it cost — the scene, confusing as it is, would have been better played against black drapes or white studio walls.

Throughout the 22nd season, the effort put into visual effects, set design, costume design and music doesn't seem to match up to earlier series from the same production team. Not that the people concerned aren't putting in the work — it's more likely that having worked on the show for so long, they hadn't the motivation to put in the extra graft so necessary to make *Doctor Who* work. However, none of the other shows of this season are quite so devoid of any spark of imagination as *TIMELASH*. *ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN* had ambitious location work, *VENGEANCE ON VAROS* was social comment, trying to transcend its budget. *THE TWO DOCTORS* looked like fun to make, *THE MARK OF THE RANI* was nicely filmed and *REVELATION OF THE DALEKS* was a daringly dark programme for early evening Saturday transmission. Only *TIMELASH* is empty — the production team seem, in this one instance, to have given up trying to present anything other than completely predictable, formulaic *Doctor Who*. And *TIMELASH* fails because there isn't anything at all that goes right. There are lengthy, static shots of the Bandril ship — and later the Bandril missile — and repetitive pictures of Peri being menaced by a Morlox, presumably there because the show was running so short and it had to be padded out to 45 minutes. Colin Baker's hair changes in length and style from scene to scene thanks to the remount. Both villains die twenty minutes from the end, only for one of them to be unconvincingly resurrected to give everyone something to do. Part two begins to resemble the last stage of a marathon, with writer, production team and audience desperately struggling to get over the finishing line — in any condition.

Surprisingly enough then, the best bit of the whole thing is the six minutes or so inserted as last-minute padding toward the end of episode two, as the Doctor argues with first Peri and then Herbert while waiting for the Bandril missile to strike. While David Chandler as Herbert could be considered annoying, he does at least appear to be in control of his performance in a way few others in this show — particularly not Paul Darrow or Jeananne Crowley — are, and he and Colin Baker know how to milk the dialogue for both humour and tension. Perhaps they should just have grabbed Peri and left, sparing the rest of us the closing ten minutes...

The closing credits provide one surprise — the name of Alan Wareing, subsequently director of *THE GREATEST SHOW IN THE GALAXY*, *GHOST LIGHT* AND *SURVIVAL*, as Production Manager. Perhaps it was on *TIMELASH* that he learnt exactly what not to do.





CONSOLE, FLICKING SWITCHES AND MOVING CONTROLS. HE HAS A WORRIED FROWN AS PERI LOOKS ON)

PERI: Is it serious?

DOCTOR: (CONTEMPLATES AN ANSWER. BEAT. THEN) Do let me get on young lady, I can't stand around all day answering your questions.

PERI: Then it is serious.

DOCTOR: (POINTING TO SCREEN ON CONSOLE) You see this?

PERI: (A LITTLE FLIPPANT) Looks like a mass of telephone cables or (PEERING) a spaghetti factory at a pinch.

DOCTOR: It's a Kontron Tunnel...

At the end of this scene Roberts took out the Doctor describing how the ship's internal dimensions will try and realign themselves if collision with the tunnel occurs, resulting in an external implosion.

Two further TARDIS scenes, predominantly featuring the Doctor wrestling with circuitry as Peri monitors console activity, were dropped completely.

After Renis has departed the Council chamber, heading for the power vaults, a sequence of Vena and Mykros embracing was deleted, as was a short subsequent scene of the Borad monitoring the two lovers, snapping off these images he cannot bear to watch.

The sanctum scene as the TARDIS begins to materialise lost Brunner's opening question to Tekker about only having two days to retrieve the amulet, and its suffix as he and Kendron stare incredulous at the slowly appearing police box.

Another 30-second snip took out Peri and the Doctor's scene aboard the TARDIS immediately after arrival:

CUTS: Unable to alter the ending to part one Pennant Roberts began the task of chopping several minutes out of the opening episode. Top and tailing — the removal of scene beginnings and endings to leave only the 'meat in the middle' — was the method he favoured, but it was not a technique he could always apply..

The already much rewritten second TARDIS scene lost several seconds from its beginning and end;

(THE DOCTOR IS MOVING SWIFTLY AROUND THE

DOCTOR: (RELIEVED) Made it! Told you there's be no problem. Piece of cake.

PERI: (PERI SMIRKS AT HIS CHANGED ATTITUDE, SO TYPICAL OF THE DOCTOR) What's the final damage?

DOCTOR: She's going to require some running repairs, but I think we're still in business. (SMILES WITH PRIDE) The old girl's tougher than I thought.

PERI: So where and when are we? (THEY SCAN THE INNER SANCTUM. THE DOCTOR RECOGNISES IT)

DOCTOR: Now that's interesting...

Later, after Peri has been escorted off to begin her tour of the citadel, the start of the Doctor's argument with Tekker about Vena was chopped:

DOCTOR: Now Maylin, I hope you don't mind answering a few important questions.

TEKKER: Let me guess the first on your lips. (GRINS) The Timelash.

One significant edit was to the end of the scene in the Borad's vault as the android report's on Peri's capture. The lost dialogue would have explained why Tekker took it upon himself to have the Doctor thrown into the Timelash after his return with the amulet.

BORAD: ...Ensure you have the Maylin's amulet in your grasp before committing him to the same fate.

ANDROID: Can he not be of help to you?

BORAD: Although I have given you a facility to think, I don't want my instructions to be questioned!

ANDROID: Borad.

BORAD: No, he's too cunning to have around. His TARDIS is prize enough.

ANDROID: The Doctor will be removed.

BORAD: Make sure he is. He's a threat to our plans.

Lastly, Pennant Roberts took out Vena's initial reactions to stepping aboard the TARDIS as the journey back to Karfel begins:

DOCTOR: Welcome aboard. Sorry we haven't got time for the niceties.

(THE DOCTOR USES THE CONSOLE TO RESET A COURSE FOR KARFEL) It may get a little bumpy, so you'll have to hang on to the console.

VENA: So this is the famous TARDIS. I never thought I'd actually see it, let alone travel in it.

DOCTOR: I'm flattered that I left such an impression behind after my last visit, though frankly not surprised.

To bring the episode exactly in at 45 minutes Pennant Roberts moved all the footage of Peri being taken out to the Morlox cavern by a Guardolier from part one to part two. Yet even with these additions, and the padding scene with Herbert aboard the TARDIS, part two just under-ran 45 minutes with a completed running length of 44' 36".

TRANSMISSION:

TIMELASH was first broadcast on Saturday 9 March 1985. Promotion for the serial was minimal, extending only to a column width photograph of Paul Darrow as Tekker adjoining the cast listing in *Radio Times*. That same listing also contained a typographical error, naming the show's main villain as 'Board' not Borad.

Among the production team there was a general air of

disappointment about the finished result. Pennant Roberts was unhappy, feeling he'd been given a poor script and little support for his suggestions to improve matters. "I don't think *Doctor Who* was built for 45-minute episodes" he told Richard Marson for *DWM*. "its emphasis is on a kind of adventure short-hand and rapid pace". Roberts never worked on the series again although his career continued to flourish on such productions as *Howard's Way*, *Albion Market*, *The Snow Spider* and episodes of *Wycliffe*.

Colin Baker too was less than enthusiastic, naming *TIMELASH* as the least favourite of his stories. "There was nothing intrinsically wrong with it" he said to Penny Latimer, again for *DWM*. "It's just that, of that particular series, it's the one that didn't work for me. I didn't think that the Doctor's element was as strong as I'd have liked."

Glen McCoy was more upbeat with his feedback, but not without some reservations which he voiced to Lee Ryder in a *DWM* interview. "I did find it enjoyable although the Director, I felt, was a little autocratic in that if he had an idea, it would happen that way. Other Directors I have worked with would have left it up to me."

McCoy's continued enthusiasm led him to accept W.H.Allen's commission for him to write the novel of the

serial. The result was a 124-page adaptation published in hardback for December 1985, with a cover by David McAllister, and in paperback form in May 1986. The writer used this opportunity to put back in a lot more of his own original dialogue from the script, plus some of the relationship detail that had been glossed over in the teleplay. He also added some additional plot development by showing how the Doctor defeated the Borad's androids after the death of their master.

Liz Parker's incidental music from *TIMELASH* was segued into a complete suite and released as a track on *Doctor Who — Thirty Years at the Radiophonic Workshop* which was released in July 1993 by BBC Records. BBC Video finally released a complete tape of the story in January 1998.

CONTINUITY:

The Eye of Orion is, yet again, the Doctor's preferred holiday destination at the beginning of this story. The venue was last seen at the beginning of *THE FIVE DOCTORS*.

As they head towards collision with the Kontron Tunnel, Peri voices her belief that only the Daleks operate this kind of temporal link. She is referring to events in *RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS*, which was a Tegan, not a Peri, show. During the story the Doctor reiterates that he is still President of the Time Lords.

Maylin Tekker is suprised to find the Doctor is only accompanied by a single companion, implying that the third Doctor had more than one assistant with him during his first visit





to Karfel. Virgin's Missing Adventure range has implied that the Doctor visited Karfel while taking Jo Grant and Mike Yates on a test-flight of the TARDIS during season ten.

The Doctor wasn't the only Time Lord Herbert George Wells encountered during his life. According to Malcolm Hulke's novelisation *The Space War*, the Master is the proud owner of a signed, first edition, copy of *The War of the Worlds*, which he is reading in part four of *FRONTIER IN SPACE*.

TRIVIA:

Eric Saward changed the reference in Glen McCoy's script from returning Peri to Earth in 1984 to returning Peri to Earth in 1985.

Tekker paraphrases one of the most famous lines from the movies as he warns the Doctor to, "Choose your next words carefully. They could be your last." The

original phrase, "Choose your next witticism carefully, Mr Bond, it could be your last" was uttered to 007 by Goldfinger in the film of the same name during the laser beam scene.

The word 'Timelash' has an unfortunate anagram, which critics have quoted with some glee when describing the story.



An Adventure in Space and Time

Timelash isn't the only link between HG Wells' Time Traveller and the Doctor. Stephen Baxter's 1995 novel *The Time Ships*, a sequel to Wells' *The Time Machine*, won the John W. Campbell Award for the best SF novel of the year. But he originally envisaged it as a new Adventure for the Doctor...

"My original idea was to write it for the **Doctor Who** range, because I needed a simple, familiar time traveller to tell this complex story through, and I thought of **Doctor Who** first. If it had been a **Doctor Who** book, my basic premise was that somebody steals the TARDIS and goes off and does all this illegal history changing stuff, so the Time Lords would get involved in this mental Time War, with the Doctor at the centre."

in the published novel, the Time Traveller journeys into the future to try and rescue Weena, but finds himself in a future history which has been changed by the writings of his

Chronicler friend, Mr Wells. Accompanied by a civilised Morlock, he visits a twentieth century trapped in perpetual war, where both powers are attempting to duplicate his time machine as the ultimate weapon, and is eventually trapped in the distant past...

"The main difference is that I would have tried to have found a human story for the Doctor to resolve - he's got the fight with the bad guy who's stolen the TARDIS, but there needs to be something more personal, like the Time Traveller's attempts to rescue Weena, the Eloi he saves from the Morlocks, as he's fired across this infinity of alternate universes.

"There would have been less of the twentieth century element there is in *The Time Ships* - that was all drawn from Wells, with the Time Traveller seeing what the twentieth century was like if it had been like Wells' predictions, which is a pretty terrible place. People living under great domes with German bombers permanently overhead. Instead, there would have been more in the deep past, with the Doctor struggling to survive as they wait for the villains bomb them, and for Guy Gibson to arrive and take them off on their further adventures..."

As a side note, Baxter (whose novel is referenced in Lance Parkin's *The Infinity Doctors*) is well aware of the Doctor's encounter with HG Wells. "I spent ages tracking down the novelisation of *Timelash*, and eventually paid £50 for it - the dealer definitely saw me coming!"

A Shot in the Foot

During the weeks when the whole of Fleet Street seemed to go into over-drive on Doctor Who behalf, determined that the BBC should not be allowed to axe the series, it is conceivable that Michael Grade may have questioned the wisdom of his headline-making decision.

When even the ski slopes of Europe couldn't provide a safe haven from the prying questions of reporters, he could perhaps have considered reviewing the evidence behind the verdict he had made. Had such doubts still been in his mind upon returning to England, it is possible he might have sat down one Saturday in early March 1985 and watched an episode of **Doctor Who**, just as the BBC were hoping the great British viewing public were doing as well.

The story he would have watched would have been *TIMELASH*.

In their respective season polls and surveys, members of the *Doctor Who* Appreciation Society and readers of *Doctor Who Magazine* put *TIMELASH* in bottom

place. "An all-time low" remarked *DWAS* member David Hodson, while fellow member Mark Brown wondered, "...What was it all about?"

Australian fanzine editor Anthony Howe was even more scathing. "The tinsel sets were tawdry and the seat-belts on the TARDIS console were laughable. The actors made little effort - Herbert was so bad I thought he might be Adric's elder brother!"

Faced with this feedback, and the serial's ultimate fate of being placed third from bottom in the *DWM* all-time story poll, a ratings disaster might easily have been expected. And yet *TIMELASH* was not a ratings failure, despite facing opposition in week one from **The A-Team** on ITV, and in week two (in some regions) from the start of series two of HTV/Goldcrest's critically acclaimed series **Robin of Sherwood**, starring Michael Praed.

Part one pulled in a satisfactory 6.7 million viewers, ranking 69th in the viewing charts for the week of 9 March, while part two bolstered figures up to 7.4 million, though with a chart drop to 79th. The average

attained - 7.05 million - was par for the season as a whole, proving that the show still had a loyal audience who were able to forgive tinsel sets and ham-acted performances. On the other hand, given such massive Press and media hype over the issue of cancellation, it could be argued ratings should have been much higher than they actually were.

By the time episode one of *TIMELASH* was aired, the BBC's Board of Governors had already overturned the cancellation decision and authorised a press statement declaring **Doctor Who** to be alive and well and in safe hands at the BBC. The show would not return in January as before, but in the autumn of 1986, making for an eighteen-month break between seasons instead of the normal nine.

As *TIMELASH* faded from the screens all seemed more or less well again in the world of **Doctor Who**. What was unknown to fans and viewers alike in mid-March was that the series' return would be under rather reduced circumstances.

TIMELASH

Series 22
Story 5
Serial 141
Code 6Y

Cast:

The Doctor [1-2] Colin Baker
Peri Brown [1-2] Nicola Bryant
Tekker [1-2] Paul Darrow
Mykros [1-2] Eric Deacon
Vena [1-2] Jeaneanne Crowley
Maylin Renis [1] Neil Hallett
The Borad [1-2] Robert Ashby
Kendron [1-2] David Ashton
Herbert [1-2] David Chandler
Brunner [1-2] Peter Robert Scott
Sezon [1-2] Dicken Ashworth
Herbert [1-2] David Chandler
Katz [1-2] Tracy-Louise Ward
Tyneer [1] Martin Gower
Aram [1] Christine Kavanagh
Gazak [1] Steven Mackintosh
Old Man [1-2] Denis Carey
Android [1-2] Dean Hollingsworth
Guardolier [1-2] James Richardson

Small and Non-Speaking:

Bandril Ambassador [1-2]*Martin Gower
Guardoliers [1-2] Peter Gates Fleming

Young Karfelon [1] Kevin O'Brien
Rebel [1-2] Richard Bonehill
Rebel [2] Chris Bradshaw
Mike Nagel
Brian Melloy
'Heard offscreen in part one, but actor is credited for another role'

Crew:

Title Music by Ron Grainer
Arranged by Peter Howell
and the Radiophonic Workshop
Incidental Music Liz Parker
Special Sound Dick Mills
Production Assistant Jane Whittaker
replacing Wendy Plowright
[remount] Elizabeth Sherry
Production Manager Alan Wareing
replacing Jim Capper
[remount] Michael Cameron
Assistant Floor Manager Abigail Sharp
[remount] Jo O'Leary
Floor Assistant Helen Greaves
[remount] Anna Price

Lighting Director Henry Barber
replacing Don Babbage
[remount] Don Babbage
Technical Co-Ordinator Alan Arbuthnott
Studio Sound Andy Stacey
replacing Terry Frost

Production Operative Supervisor

Ray Davies
Production Operatives Harry Greek
Brian Green
John Greenham
Les Thatcher

Guitar Player

Grams Dave Chapman
Video Effects Jayne Beckett
Vision Mixer [remount] Dinah Long

Videotape Editor

Hugh Parson
Camera Supervisor Alec Wheel
Crew Eleven
Props Buyer Al Huxley

[remount] Howard Jones

Costume Designer Alun Hughes

[remount] Pat Godfrey

Costume Assistant Liz Dawson

Dressers

Liz Dixon
Alan Hatchman
Lesley Bingham
Stephen Smith
[remount] John Watts

Make Up Artist

[remount] Dorka Nieradzki

Make Up Assistant Wendy Harrison

Visual Effects Designer Kevin Molloy

Visual Effects Assistant Paul Mann

Title Sequence Terry Handley

Sid Sutton

Designer Bob Cove

[remount] Alan Spaulding

Design Assistant Francis Boyle

[remount] Adele Maroff

Production Secretary Sarah Lee

Production Associate Sue Anstruther

[remount] Angela Smith

Writer

Glen McCoy

Script Editor Eric Saward

Producer John Nathan-Turner

Director Pennant Roberts

Programme Numbers:

Part One:

Part Two:

Rehearsals:

21st November — 3rd December 1984

7th - 18th December 1984

Recording:

4th — 6th December 1984, TC4

19th — 21st December 1984, TC8

30th January 1985, TC8

Transmission:

One: 9th March 1985, 17.20pm BBC1

[45'00", 17.23.-- — 18.08.--]

Two: 16th March 1985, 17.20pm BBC1

[44'36", 17.21.-- — 18.05.--]

Audience, Position, Appreciation:

Part One: 6.7m, 69th, 65%.

Part Two: 6.0m, 79th, 65%.



Books and Literature

HOWE, STAMMERS, WALKER: **Doctor Who - The Sixth Doctor Handbook** (WH Allen, 1993)

HULKE, Malcolm: **Doctor Who: The Space War** (Target, 1976)

McCOY, Glen: **Doctor Who: Timelash** (WH Allen, 1986)

HOWE, STAMMERS, WALKER: **Doctor Who - The Television Companion** (BBC, 1998)

WELLS, HG: **The Invisible Man**

WELLS, HG: **The Island of Dr Moreau**

WELLS, HG: **The Time Machine**

WELLS, HG: **The War of the Worlds**

WELLS, HG: **The War of the Worlds**

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Virgin Witch (1972)

Vol-au-Vont (1996)

X the Unknown (1956)

A Zed and Two Noughts

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THE ABYSS (ITC: 1-11-1980)

The Heart Surgeon

Howard's Way (BBC1, 1985 - 1990)

Jeeves and Wooster: THE MATCHMAKER

The Lakes (BBC1, 1998 - 1999)

The Legend of Robin Hood (BBC1, 23-

11-75 - 28-12-75)

A Little Princess

The Living Planet (BBC1, 1984)

Lord Peter Wimsey: MURDER MUST

ADVERTISE (BBC1, 30-11-73 - 21-12-73)

Love on the Dole

Lovejoy: THE JUDGEMENT OF SOLOMAN

(BBC1)

Maigret (HTV, 25-8-88)

Making News (LWT: 9-5-89; 16-1-90 -

19-2-90)

Minder: SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (Thames/

Euston, 1-1-80)

Oliver Twist (BBC1, 13-10-85 - 29-12-

85)

Operation Julie (Tyne Tees: 4-11-85 - 6-

11-85)

The Persuaders: THAT'S ME OVER THERE

(ITC: 3-12-71)

Pie in the Sky (BBC1, 1994-97)

Prime Suspect IV: INNER CIRCLES

(Granada, 7-5-95)

The Professionals: ROGUE (11-11-78);

WILD JUSTICE (14-9-80)

The Racing Game (Thames, 21-11-79 -

9-1-80)

Redcap: THE PRIDE OF THE REGIMENT

(ABC: 9-4-66)

Reilly Ace of Spies (Thames/Euston: 5-

9-83 - 16-11-83)

Return to Treasure Island (HTV, 1986)

The Saint: THE PEOPLE IMPORTERS (22-12-

68), THE GADIC COLLECTION (22-9-68)

The Snow Spider (HTV: 26-11-88 - 17-

12-88)

Tenko (BBC1, 1981-84)

The Tripods (BBC1, 1984-85)

Wycliffe (HTV: 1993-1998)

Doctor Who

The Ark of Space (Space and Time 2)

Attack of the Cybermen (IN•VISION 79)

The Chase (Space and Time 16)

The Curse of Fatal Death (Comic

Relief)

The Dominators (Spce and Time 44)

Earthshock (IN•VISION 60)

The Face of Evil (IN•VISION 19)

The Five Doctors (IN•VISION 69)

Ghost Light

The Greatest Show in the Galaxy

Invasion of the Dinosaurs (space and

Time 71)

The Invasion of Time (IN•VISION 29)

The Keeper of Traken (IN•VISION 51)

The Mark of the Rani (IN•VISION 81)

Revelation of the Daleks (IN•VISION

84)

The Space Pirates (Space and Time

49)

The Stones of Blood (IN•VISION 34)

Survival

The Talons of Weng-Chiang

(IN•VISION 21)

The Three Doctors (Space and Time

65)

The Twin Dilemma (IN•VISION 77)

The Two Doctors (IN•VISION 82)

Vengeance on Varos (IN•VISION 80)

Warriors of the Deep (IN•VISION 71)



